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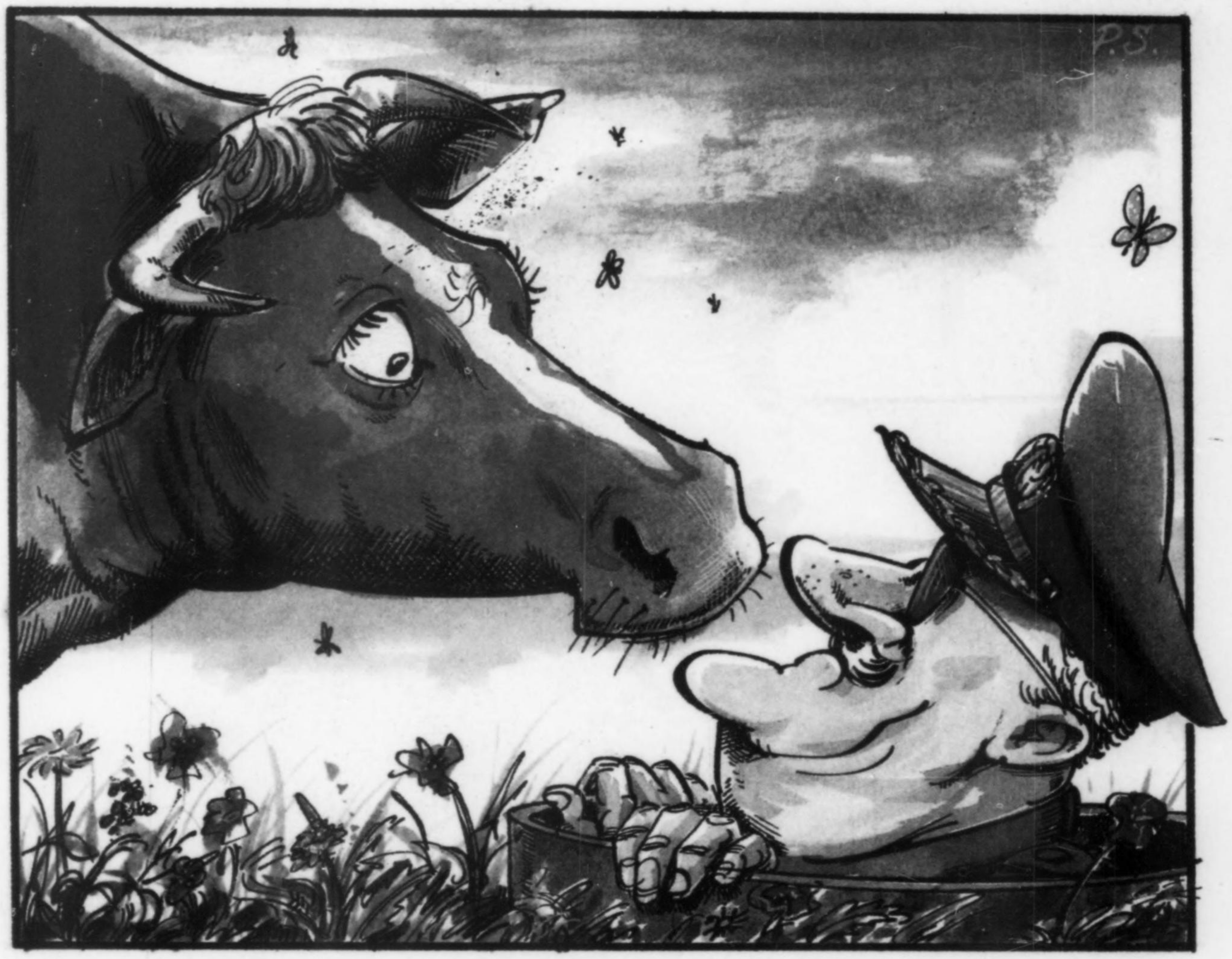

Bunking off

Thatcher's new home could cost a billion, deep under leafy Wiltshire. Her generals are already in residence. Duncan Campbell is your guide to World War Three hideaways

Abroad: China on the streets; Michael Arlen's Armenian journal

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Britain: R W Johnson on Labour's strategy; how the right lives off our charity

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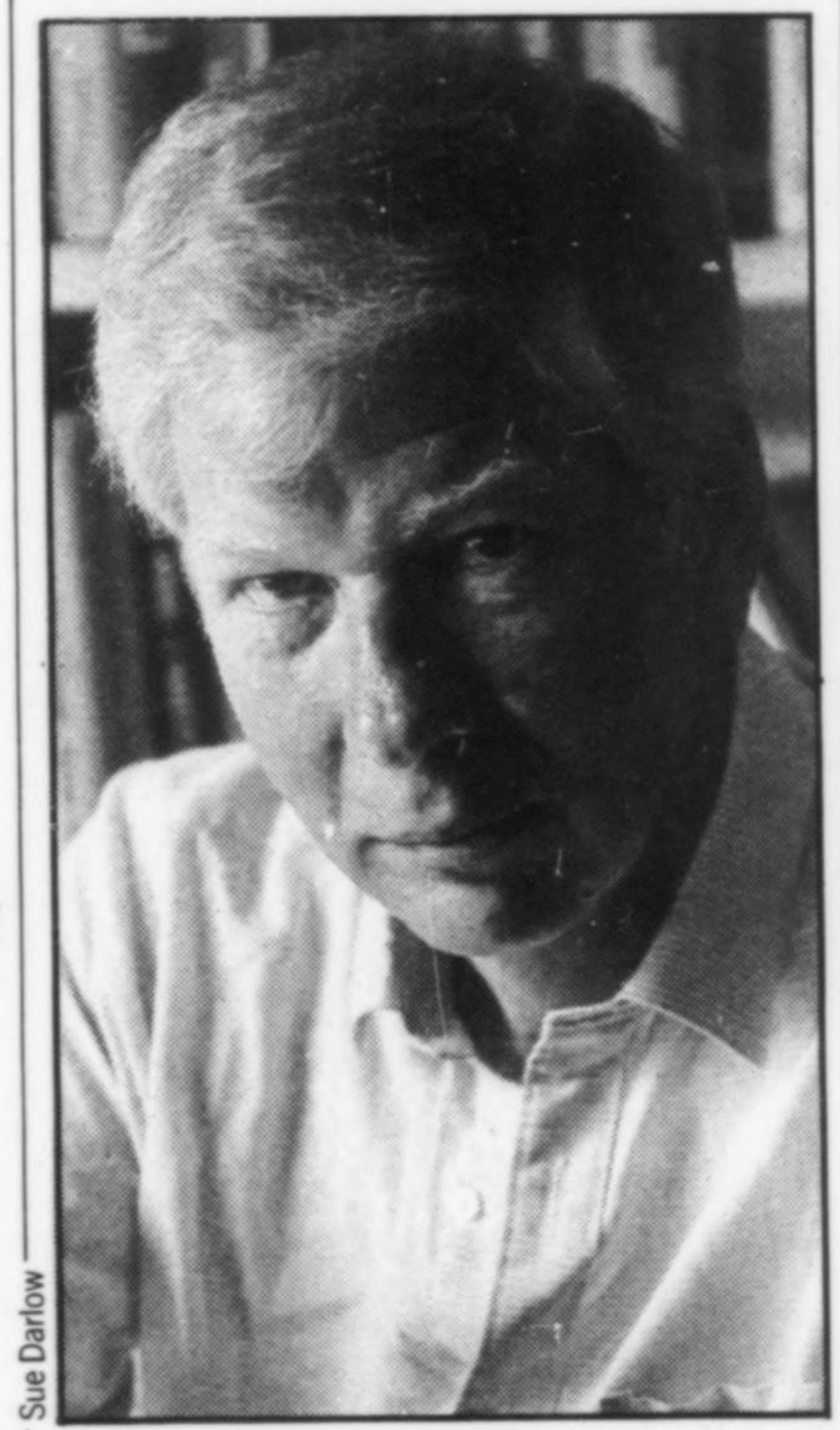
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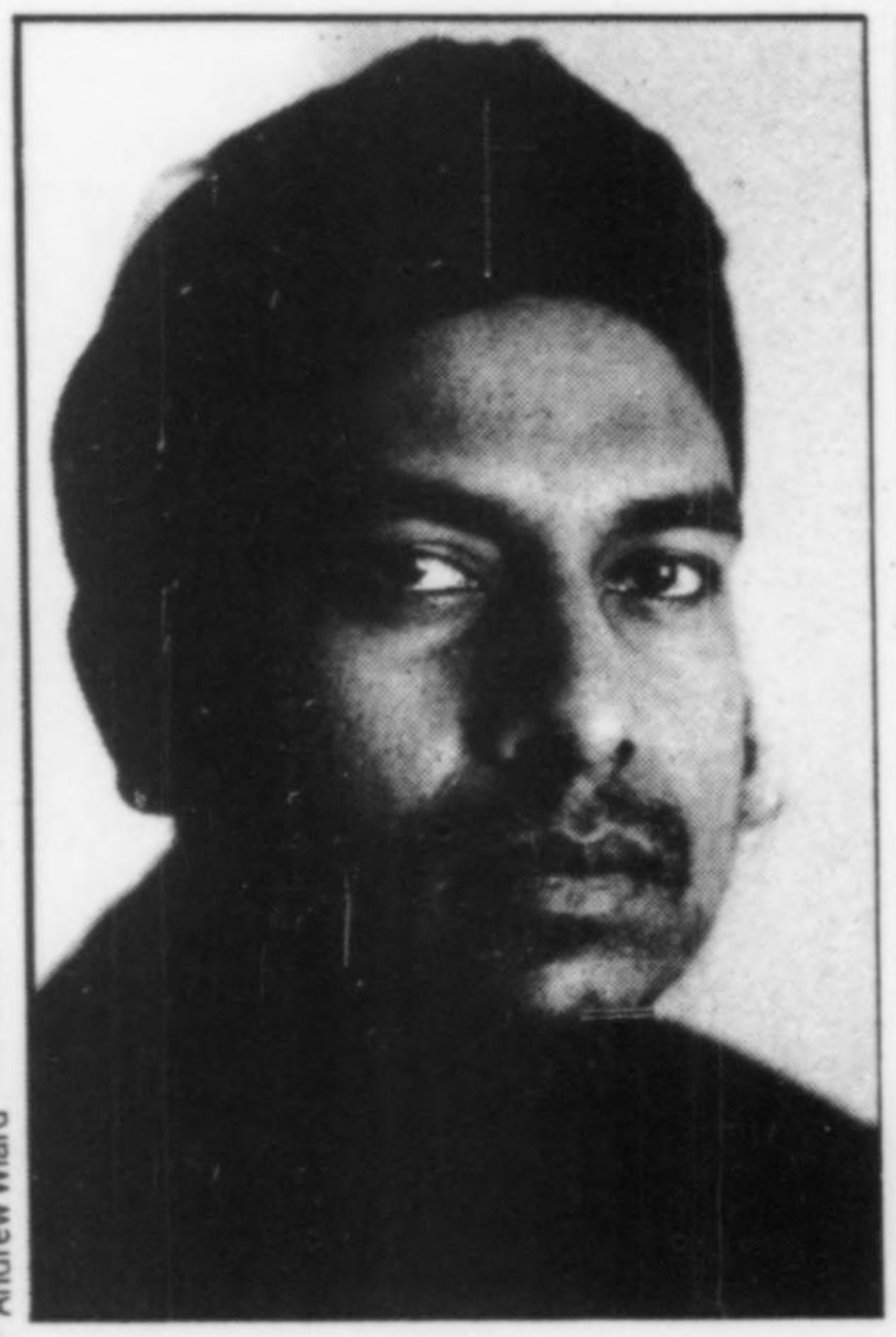
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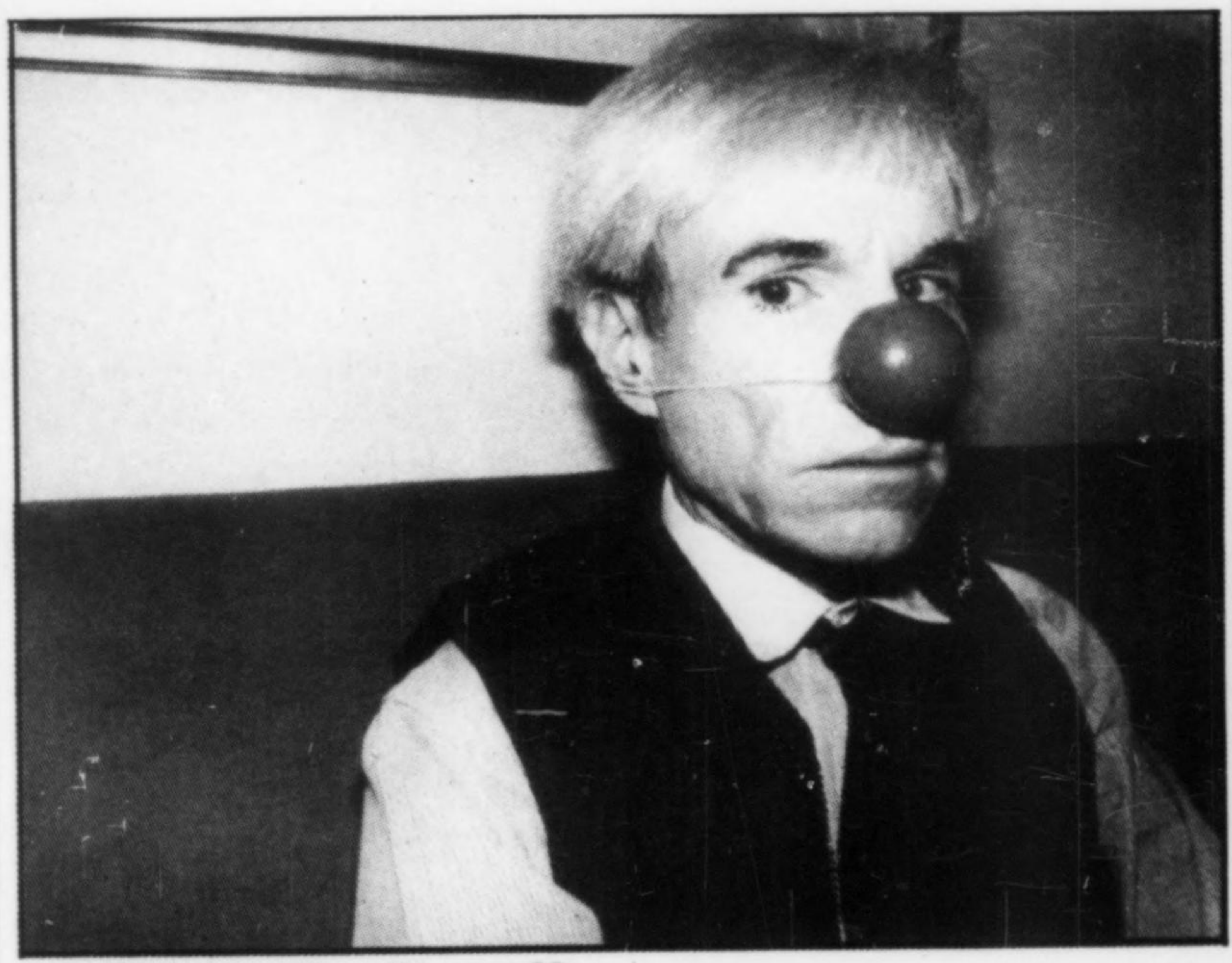
Andy Warhol "goofing off", page 36

as possible, full equality of resources. Thus they favour positive discriminatory education policies and a lifetime capital receipts tax whose proceeds are used to finance a "poll-grant": a capital sum given to everyone on attaining the age of majority.

In the welfare area, market socialists wish to avoid the power imbalance between the bureaucrat and the client for the service. Hence they advocate vouchers; an idea recently colonised by the right, but which contains much that is intrinsically left-wing (such as transferring power from the relatively powerful to the relatively powerless). An example of a left-wing voucher scheme is one that offers vouchers for, say, the purchase of higher education that are of greater value to the poor than to the rich and where "topping up" out of private funds is not allowed.

Market socialists are well aware of the defects of markets and have many proposals for dealing with them. But they are also aware of the problems with the alternatives, problems that are in their view much more intractable than those of markets. There is no perfect way to organise society; but, of the alternatives on offer, market socialism is the least-worst.

Julian Le Grand is Professor of Public Policy at the School for Advanced Urban Studies, University of Bristol, and editor with Saul Estrin of Market Socialism, published by Oxford University Press on 1 June and to be reviewed in next week's "NSS".

WELFARE WATCH

No, Minister: many of the poor are poorer now than in 1979. And here is some evidence

If John Moore is right in claiming that the living standards of the poor have risen, it is certainly not a result of Tory social security legislation. A comparison of the benefits a typical family with a sick or unemployed breadwinner would have received in 1979 with what a similar family gets today shows dramatic losses.

An unemployed man with a wife and two children, ten years ago, was entitled to unemployment benefit of £25.50 a week for himself and his wife and an addition of £3.70 for the children. For the first six months he was also entitled to an earnings-related supplement which, for an average earner, was about £13.10. Adding £4 child benefit for each child gave a total of £50.30.

Since then, the additions to unemployment benefit for claimants with children have been abolished; earnings-related supplements have been abolished; unemployment benefit has become taxable; and the real value of child benefit has fallen. The same family would now get £56.10 a week in unemployment benefit and £14.50 child benefit, £70.60 in all. Unless their income for the whole year was below the tax threshold, they would pay tax of £8.67 a week on the unemployment benefit, reducing the total to £61.93.

Taking inflation into account, the 1979 benefit income of £50.30 would have had to rise to £111.95 to be worth as much today. In today's prices, therefore, that family is £50 a week worse off. To keep up with the growth in average earnings, their benefits would would have to be worth £139.70, or more than twice the amount they are actually getting.

There has been a similar fall in the benefit income of a two-child family with the father off work through long-term sickness and the mother earning £45 a week in 1979 and the same proportion of average earnings in 1989 (about £120). They would have received £46.05 invalidity benefit in 1979, including allowances for the wife and children, plus £8 child benefit—a total of £54.05 a week.

The additions to invalidity benefit for wives and children have not been abolished, though the value of children's addition has fallen by £3 a child. But this particular family would not qualify for either of these additions in 1989, as a result of changes in the benefit rules for claimants whose wives are working. All they would get is the single person's invalidity benefit of £52.80. Adding child benefit of £14.50 makes a total of £67.30. The 1989 equivalent of their 1979 benefit income of £54.05 would be £120.30 (£53 a week more than they get now) just to preserve its purchasing power, or £150 to keep it in line with average earnings.

Though not untypical, these are hypothetical examples. Different examples might show that some people's benefits are worth as much as they would have been ten years ago. Younger pensioners, in particular, now benefit from Labour's earnings-related pension scheme. But it would take some ingenuity to show that most sick and unemployed claimants are better off now than in 1979. *Tony Lynes*

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward ponders the roofless young

Knowing that I could spend my life just getting to know the place where I live, I think it's pointless to go anywhere unless I really can't evade it or unless someone else is paying. So it's a shock to reflect that in the past year I've been to eight British, six American, one German and four Italian cities. What could I possibly learn from this frenetic travelling?

Well, I watch out for several indicators, the most obvious of which is the accessibility and the price of public transport. Is it available and cheap? Another is working-class housing: how does it differ from the rest, is it well-maintained, is it way out there in the hinterland where nobody except the residents ever goes? Yet another thing to watch for is the evidence of a busy, informal and unofficial economy. But the final one is inevitably that of beggars in the street.

In the truly poor cities where I've never been, they tend to be children, importuning everyone. When they're not around you know that you really are in a police state. In France or Italy they tend to be worn and ravaged old people, holding out a silent hand. But in Philadelphia, just about the richest city I've ever visited, there were more beggars per yard of the revitalised, regenerated city centre around Market Street than I have met in a lifetime. I would say that they were mostly in the 20-55 age range, and they held out placards to explain just why they needed your small change.

Whenever I go to London I'm aware of an endlessly growing number of people cadging money in the streets. And the most obvious are not pathetic old winos, but people in their teens and early twenties. Plenty of them belong to an age-range calculatedly cut out from social security benefits, as in theory they might have signed up for training placements which turn out not to exist. Or they are even younger, on account of the gap between the age at which you get out of local authority care and the point when the adult world assumes any responsibility.

Nick Hardwick of Centrepoint in London makes a chilling comment on the way we have hedged around the social payouts with such restrictions that it's simpler to ignore them. Warning us all, he says that once such a situation exists, "it's impossible to get the street culture genie back into the bottle".

With a commendable lack of commonsense realism the body called Charity Projects commissioned Danny Levine, with long experience of coping with the single homeless, to report on how the footloose and roofless young could change their lives by housing themselves. What an absurd proposition! Haven't we all read that they're into drugs, Aids, prostitution, nicking car radios and everything else reprehensible?

Levine quietly set about the task and has just produced his report (*Building young lives: Self-build and young single homeless people*, £3.50 from the National Federation of Housing Associations, 175 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8UP). He burrowed through the obstacle race we have set up to prevent anyone from doing anything, and looked beyond the fact that land speculation has made sites too valuable to be useful. The possibility really does exist, he finds, drawing upon the experience of groups like Zenzele in Bristol, Giroscope in Hull, or the Walter Segal Self-Build Trust.

It really can happen, but unless there are people around to initiate projects, it probably won't. This is Levine's careful message, just as it is that of Steve Platt who introduced it with the comment that "something can be done and there is something that everyone can contribute towards doing it".

One thing I did learn on my travels. Everywhere I went, whether it was Klaus the Fiddler, fighting in the district court for the rights of the roofless young to recolonise central Cologne, or the People's Homesteading Group in north Baltimore, battling to twist the legislation to help the young homeless as well as the smart folk, there is an endless need for the city sophisticates to bring their know-how to the lost and bewildered young. The importance of the Levine Report is that it suggests how.

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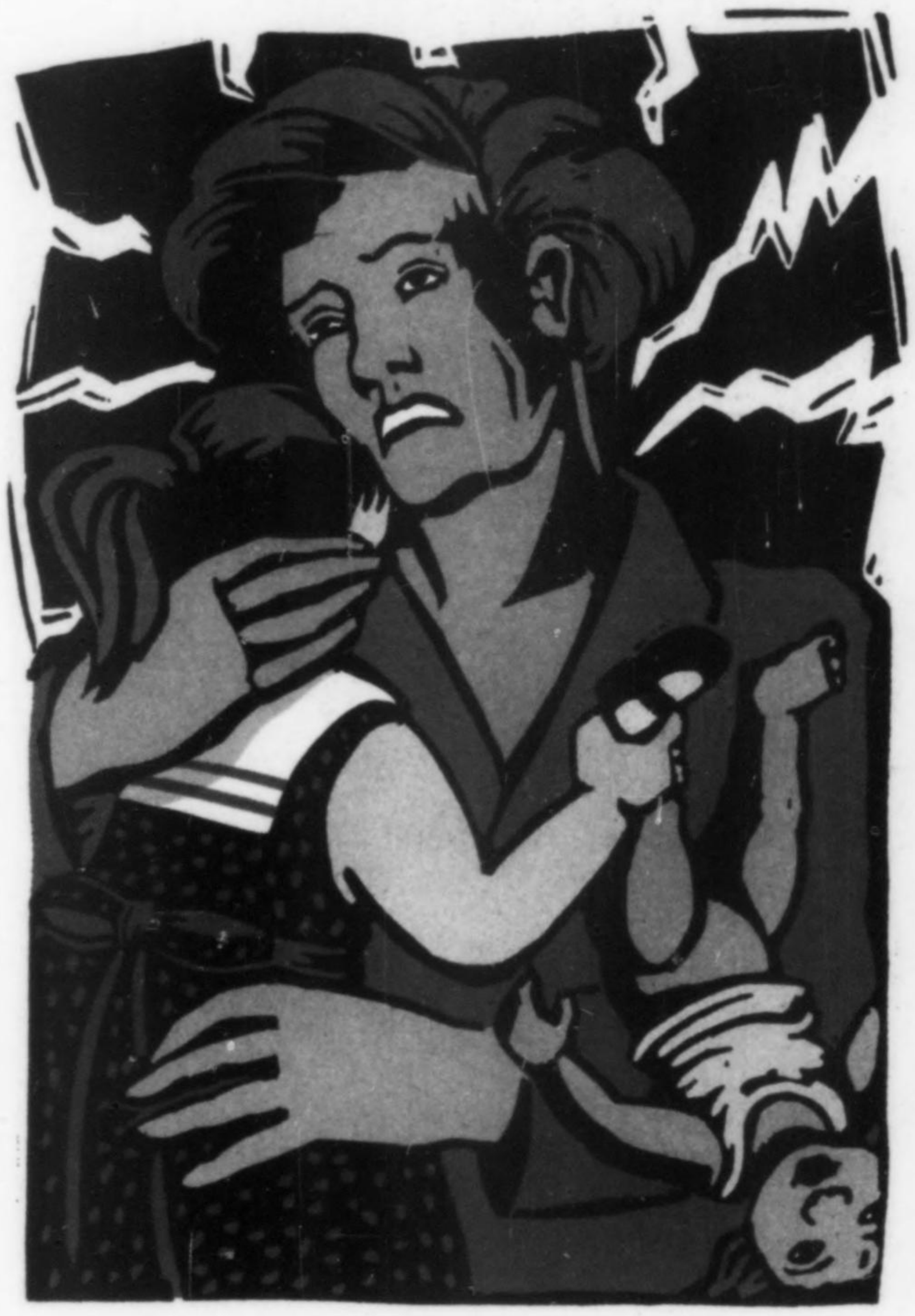
An open wound



Your daughter was once sexually abused. No one believed you then. A doctor now diagnoses new abuse. You know she's wrong—and police interviews will destroy your child's hard-won peace. Read the mother's story

David Marquand: what's right with Labour

Meat that rots the brain

Kathy Acker interviews Shere Hite

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FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward bibliographises an alternative European diversity

The only thing more depressing than the Prime Minister's attempt to "do a Falklands" in exploiting popular xenophobia about Europe, is the ignorance of her opponents. Federalism is an immensely important principle of human organisation. I have always assumed (since, whoever's in power, we are governed by graduates), that politicians have read the great classic on this theme, de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

Maybe Mrs Thatcher didn't read him because he was French, and maybe the left didn't read him because he was a conservative. But there is another immensely sympathetic, though ignored, literature about how to do it well and how to do it disastrously. I should just mention Leopold Kohr's *The Breakdown of Nations* (Routledge 1954, 1987) and Ioan Bowen Rees's *Government by Community* (Charles Knight, 1971). The reason why you've never heard of either of these serious discussions of localism and federalism is that they weren't thought worth reviewing in the journals that you and I read.

I belong, myself, to an even more way-out tradition: that of the anarchists. What could they possibly have to say about European unity? The answer, which may surprise you, is that the classical anarchist thinkers of the last century developed a rich and relevant federalist philosophy.

In 1863 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon published his book *Du Principe Fédératif*, urging, from the example of the Swiss Confederation, a society in which "the organs of administration are local and lie as near the direct control of the people as possible. Above that level the confederation becomes less an organ of administration than of coordination among local units. Thus the nation will be a confederation of regions, and Europe, a confederation of confederations." (Richard Vernon's English version, *The Principle of Federation*, appeared from the University of Toronto in 1979.)

In 1867 came Michael Bakunin, arguing that "to achieve the triumph of liberty, justice and peace in the international relations of Europe, and to render civil war impossible among the various peoples which make up the European family, only a single course lies open: to constitute the United States of Europe." *(Selected Writings*, Cape 1973). And: "Just because a region has formed part of a state, even by voluntary accession, it by no means follows that it incurs any obligation to remain tied to it for ever. The right of free union and equally free secession comes first and foremost among all political rights; without it, confederation would be nothing but centralisation in disguise."

Another Russian anarchist remarked 70 years ago, in words his country's present ruler should be heeding: "Imperial Russia is dead and will never be revived. All the attempts to bring together the constituent parts of the Russian Empire, such as Finland, the Baltic provinces, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Siberia and others, under a central authority are doomed to certain failure. The future of what was the Russian Empire is directed towards a federation of independent units." (Camillo Berneri: *Peter Kropotkin, His Federalist Ideas*, Freedom Press 1943).

I'm sorry that the politicians don't read the same books as I do. Because what I've learned from Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin is that the prerequisite of international federation is local autonomy. Way back in the 1830s, de Tocqueville put the writing on the wall for the Thatcher government when he said: "I do not think one could find a single inhabitant of New England who would recognise the right of the government of the state to control matters of purely municipal interest."

She, for demagogic reasons, applies this doctrine to the Eurocrats in Brussels. But it relates far more devastatingly to her government. De Tocqueville spelled it out for everyone. "The strength of free peoples," he found, "resides in the local community. Local institutions are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they put it within the people's reach." This is just what we can't bash into the heads of our illiterate rulers.

Mixed messages contd

practical as well as theoretical potential. The geneticist's dream would be to be able to offer genetic counselling, or ultimately gene therapy, to eliminate defective genes—or the people who carry them. And the ethical implications of such prospects have become happy hunting-grounds for moral philosophers.

For the new genetics, brain biochemical abnormalities are themselves consequences of genetic abnormalities. But is this really so?

There are a number of rare but psychiatrically debilitating conditions in which this is clearly the case. Huntington's Chorea, a disorder in which a person will develop normally to adulthood and then suffer irredeemable mental collapse in his or her thirties or forties, is the best example. Families with a history of the disease can now be screened and genetic "markers" for the condition detected by amniocentesis.

However, only a small number of conditions are so clear cut. In 1987 US researchers studying manic depression in the closed religious Amish community in Pennsylvania claimed to find a genetic "marker" for it on chromosome 11. But in the same issue of *Nature* in which they reported these findings, two other research groups, studying Icelandic and US families, could find no such genetic linkage.

A similar ambiguity surrounds schizophrenia. Late last year, a study of seven British and Icelandic families with a high incidence of schizophrenia was reported as showing linkage of the condition to chromosome 5. But a parallel Swedish study failed to show any such link. This did not stop the editor of *Nature*, John Maddox, from comenting that an understanding of the cause and possible treatment of, or at least genetic counselling for, schizophrenia, was now imminent.

Such genetic enthusiasm is surely premature. At best the manic-depressive or schizophrenia stories show that these unitary labels must mask a set of different biological conditions, some of which may be genetically associated but the majority of which are not. Not only are most schizophrenia diagnoses not linked to a chromosome 5 abnormality, but also at best the genetic abnormality only weakly predicts the condition. The majority of people with the abnormality will almost certainly never develop schizophrenia.

Imagine going through amniocentesis to be told there is a one-in-however-many chance that your unborn foetus will develop schizophrenia sometime in its life but that there is no way of telling whether it will happen, or how to prevent it. Imagine growing up knowing that such a prognosis has been wished upon you.

The issues are not much clearer even when the prediction can be made with certainty. Young couples at risk from Huntington's Chorea may decline amniocentesis. Not merely do they not want to have to make the decision to terminate a pregnancy for a condition which only appears late in life. They may also fear it will also tell them more than they wish to know about their *own* chances of developing a disease which cannot be prevented or cured. And it is claimed that in Germany young people who have been diagnosed may be refused state employ because of the pension implications. Power to predict, without power to affect fate, is as problematic for the new genetics as it was for Cassandra.

Faced with such uncertainties, we may question the molecular and genetic emphasis given to psychiatric research. It is salutory to restate the epidemiological facts which require explanation. About half to one per cent of the UK population is going to be diagnosed as schizophrenic. But if you are working class you are twice as likely to attract the diagnosis as if you are middle/upper class. If you are of Caribbean origin—or even more if you are the child of a mixed black/white relationship in Britain today—you are several times more likely to be diagnosed schizophrenic than if you are white.

Up to 10 per cent of the adult population of Britain fits a depression diagnosis, but nearly three times as many are women as men. The highest incidence of depression is found amongst working-class mothers living in high-rise inner city blocks in conditions of economic insecurity. Genetics, old or new, has nothing to say by way of explaining such discrepancies or providing treatment for such conditions. Social explanations, however old-fashioned they may seem, are still powerful. Biological knowledge devoid of social context runs the danger of becoming a newly sophisticated form of victim-blaming, a reassertion of an old myth that biology is destiny.

Steven Rose is Director of the Brain and Behaviour Research Group, Open University. His most recent book is Molecules and Minds (OUP, 1988)

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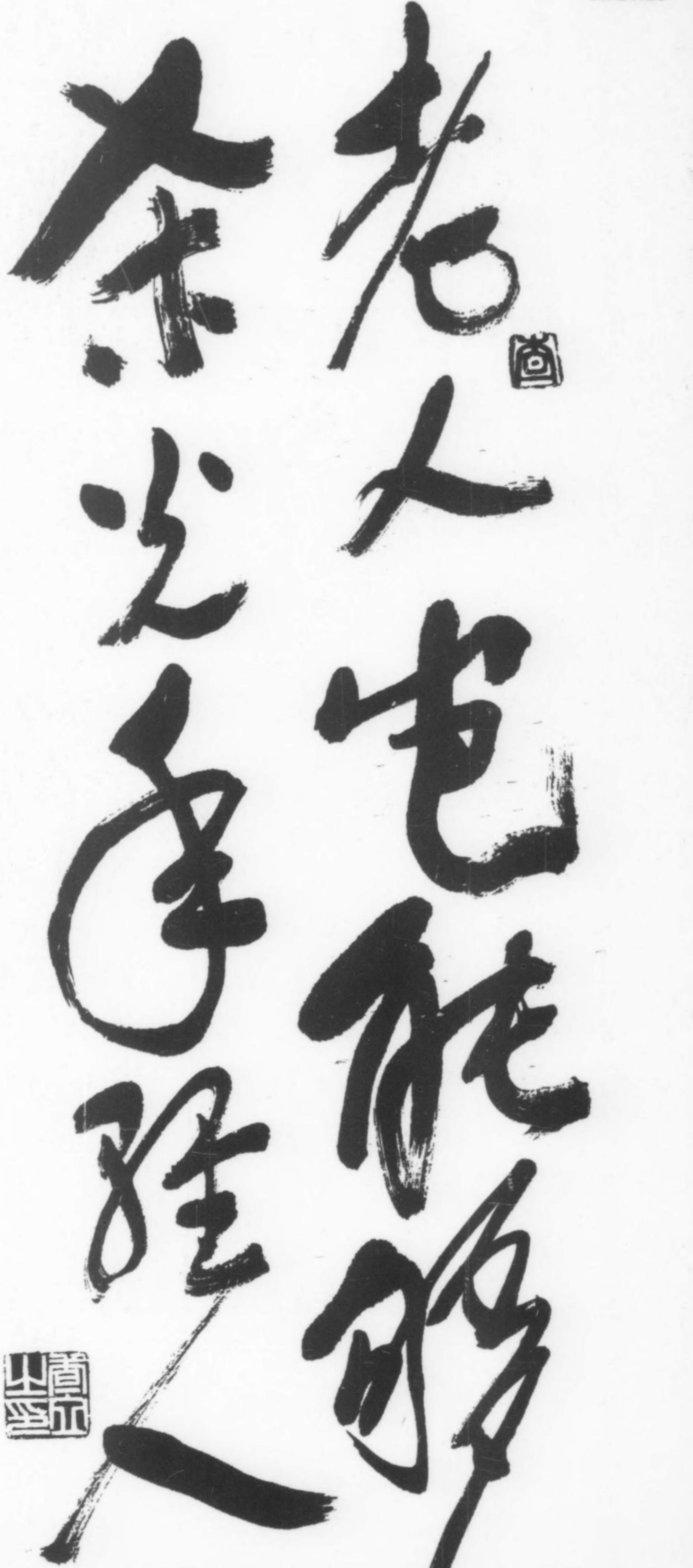
The old cannot kill the young forever



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This is the first in a new Tom Nairn series entitled "Bywords". To come "chaps", "Socialism", "north-south divide", "not-one-of-us" etc.

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operate as charities—like the free-market think-tank, the Adam Smith Institute, the hard-right Institute for the Study of Terrorism, or Lord Chalfont's Namibia Charitable Trust (an apologist for South Africa), all of which have charitable status (see "Cold charity", 26 May).

Besides, ministers have a much more subtle and effective means of controlling wayward charities—through their pockets. It is no coincidence that the government is currently engaged in a major scrutiny of state funding for the voluntary sector under the direction of John Patten, the Home Office minister, the results of which are expected in August. They are awaited with considerable interest, since Mr Patten has declared that there is a need "for standard conditions in respect of political activities, campaigning, equal opportunities etc" in the voluntary bodies funded by the government.

Central government funding of charities has increased from £93 million in 1979 to £280 million in 1986—a growth of 93 per cent in real terms. At the same time, there has been a shift away from awarding general grants towards funding specific contract work. The overall effect has already resulted in a more closely monitored funding system.

Usha Prashar, director of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, says: "In the past we used to be accountable to government in that we could not misappropriate public money, but we had freedom in how we spent it. Now there is greater scrutiny and charities are much more nervous about the kinds of work they do and the priorities they can set."

One group which has already felt the effects of new funding controls is the British Youth Council, which has just had £40,000 lopped off its annual grant. The DES has withdrawn its support for a number of specific projects—including BYC's lobbying against student university loans and its literature on lesbians and gays. Officials objected on the grounds that it "promoted homosexual behaviour to the neglect of family support", and warned that if BYC continued to produce this material its entire DES grant could be jeopardised.

"We have been left in the dark about what is and what is not acceptable to the DES," says BYC's chair, Gary Williams. "So we have to err on the side of caution. We've already dropped anything we think could lose us our funding."

As Mr Williams's comment suggests, the greatest threat to the independence of charities today is not direct government action, but self-censorship as groups begin to retract their claws under the threat of financial reprisals.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward meets the Soviet elite

I've lived a sheltered life and the only Soviet citizens I have ever known were *ex*-Soviet citizens, exiles embittered by their sufferings, or Latvians or Ukrainians, implacably hostile to Moscow.

So, last month, we were excited by the news that two dozen top-level Soviet technocrats were coming to the next village, and that we were welcome to provide beds for a pair of them. The visit was the brain-child of Denis Pym, who is a kind of consultant dissident at the London Business School where the Russians were on a short course. He is a deeply subversive advocate of what we variously describe as the domestic, informal or alternative economy (see his book *The Employment Question*, Freedom Press 1986), and felt that the visitors should encounter other aspects of our common life besides Rank-Xerox, IBM and ICI.

Brilliantly, the Pym family set up a memorable bout of truly Russian hospitality in a barn, with our local musicians playing Russian tunes to set their feet tapping, while Sergei and Mikhail did their ragtime and Beatles improvisations and recalled UB40's visit to Leningrad. Deep into the early hours of the morning we sat at home over the whisky discussing the implications of the Jugoslav, the Hungarian and the Thatcherite economic models.

Talking to our guests we learned that the change in business language so evident in Britain, where for example, British Rail now describes passengers as customers and British Telecom calls its services a product, is coming into use in the Soviet Union, where the financial profitability of the individual undertaking is becoming the paramount standard by which it is judged.

Poor old V runs a foundry south of Moscow with 4,000 employees. What is to happen when technical improvements make a large proportion of them redundant? He was confident that after three months' severance pay, they could be re-employed somewhere else. But where? Other visitors were less sure that there would be jobs for the large number of military officers made redundant by reductions in the armed forces, for example.

S, who was very much a westerniser, was young, a physicist, formidably well informed and well educated, delighted that the London Business School is close to the mythical home of Sherlock Holmes. He's a keen reader of Frederick Forsyth, Galsworthy and Graham Greene. His grandfather was executed in some pointless purge. He asks why.

We met a Soviet business manager who actually has a signed photograph of Margaret Thatcher on his office wall, and we also met Y who insisted that the problems of Soviet industry revolve around a lack of incentives in the labour force and management accountability. Worker-shareholding is the solution he offers. There were obvious disagreements among our visitors, a reflection of the remarkable pace of change in the Soviet Union. Plenty of them spoke of the inertia imposed by 140 (or was it 400?) ministries in Moscow.

After the excitement was over, I felt a quite unsought depression from our brief encounter. One reason was the sheer fragility of the liberal reforms introduced by one man who happened to have worked his way to the top of the hierarchy. The other was that the burden of change is going to be suffered, not by the pleasant people we met, but by ordinary working families who have been obliged to implement every lurch in policy from one governmental line to another, for more than a lifetime. I've seen the miles of empty steel mills on the line from Rotherham to Sheffield and in the Mon Valley outside Pittsburgh. When the Soviet managerial moguls demand that quality specialisation should take precedence over quantity production they are probably right. But *they* don't have to suffer the consequences of their shift in perspective. We learned nothing to indicate that these drastic changes will be made any more painlessly in the Soviet Union than in the United States or Britain.

DATAFILE

● **Birthday cards addressed to women are more likely to express caring and love than ones addressed to men, and to contain the words "dear" and "sweet".** Male-specific cards are more likely to contain deviant images and/or messages. That's one research finding in *Sex Roles—a Journal of Research—a* monthly report of the intriguing, quirky and blindingly obvious. Get it from Plenum Publishing Corporation, 233 Spring Street, New York NY 10013, USA.

● **Despite official warnings of a shrinking pool of labour, employers are discriminating against ageing and older workers.** *Equal Opportunities Review* has monitored nearly 11,500 job advertisements and found that more than a quarter required someone aged under 45 and almost a fifth required someone aged 35 or under. Twenty-seven per cent of all job advertisements stated an age preference, and in the *Sunday Times* appointments section, the proportion rose from 17 per cent to 59 per cent between October 1988 and March 1989. Available from Industrial Relations Services, 18-20 Highbury Place, London N5 1QP.

●**The Benefits Research Unit at Nottingham University has produced the first comprehensive guide to social security benefits available for people with HIV infection.** It cost £3 (inc p&p) from the Benefits Research Unit, Cherry Tree Buildings, Nottingham NG7 2RD.

● **Intensive intermediate treatment schemes [which involve young offenders in planned porgrammes of supervised activities] are successfully diverting many juveniles from custody and crime, according to a report from the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders.** *Replacing Custody* analyses the findings of a survey of IIT projects financed by the DHSS in 1983. It's available free, from NACRO at 169 Clapham Road, London SW9.

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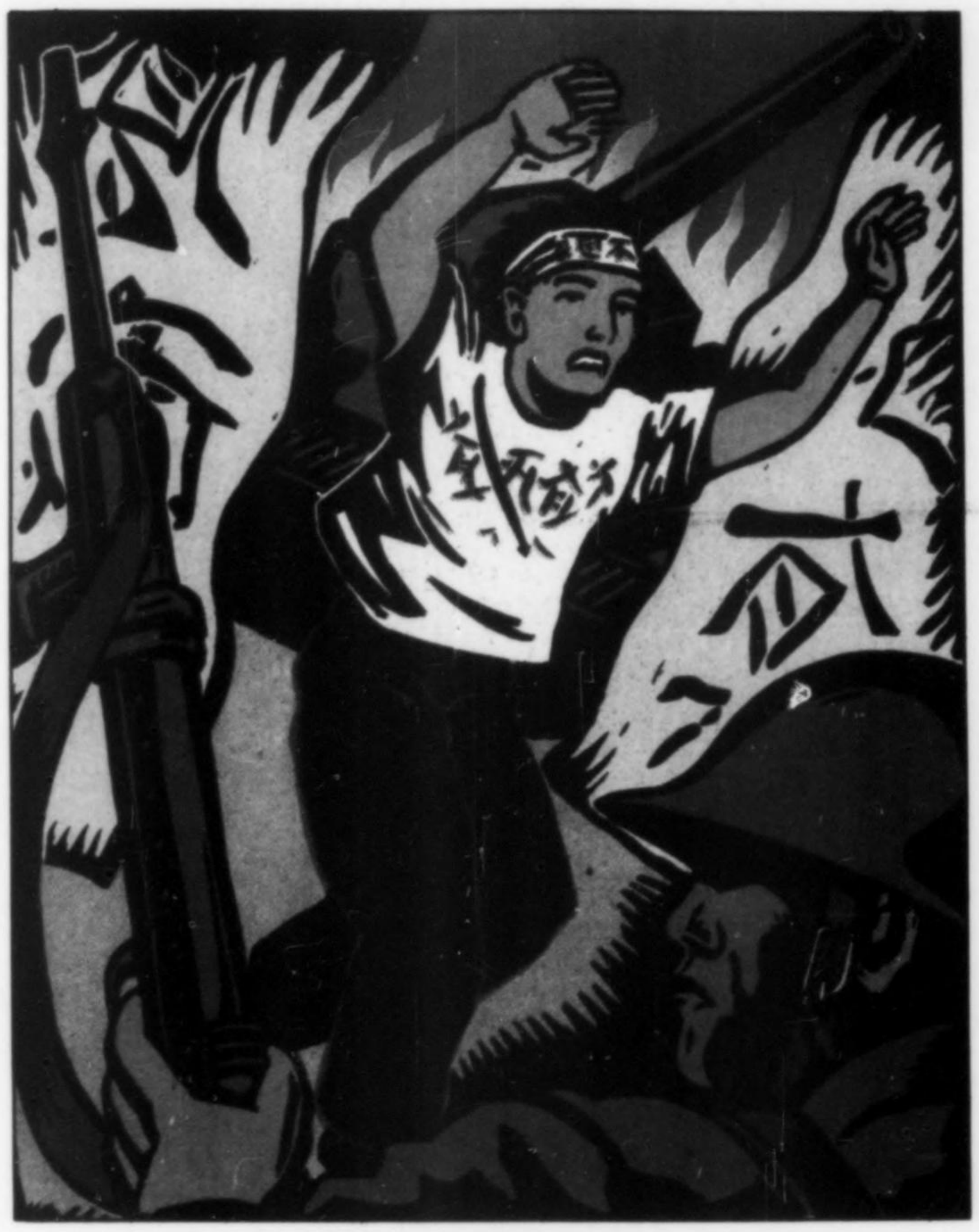
Bearing witness



My fellow students have been shot dead. My clothes are stained with their blood. As a lucky survivor, I want to tell peace-loving people across the world about the massacre

Quack busting: Duncan Campbell exposes a fake cure for Aids and ME

Aqua Libra—the yuppie Lucozade

Three men in a boat: Hattersley, Marquand, Owen chatter with David Selbourne

NEW STATESMAN & SOCIETY

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We regret that, owing to a temporary paper shortage, we are able to publish only a 56-page issue this week and we have been forced to hold over the first of Tom Nairn's Bywords.

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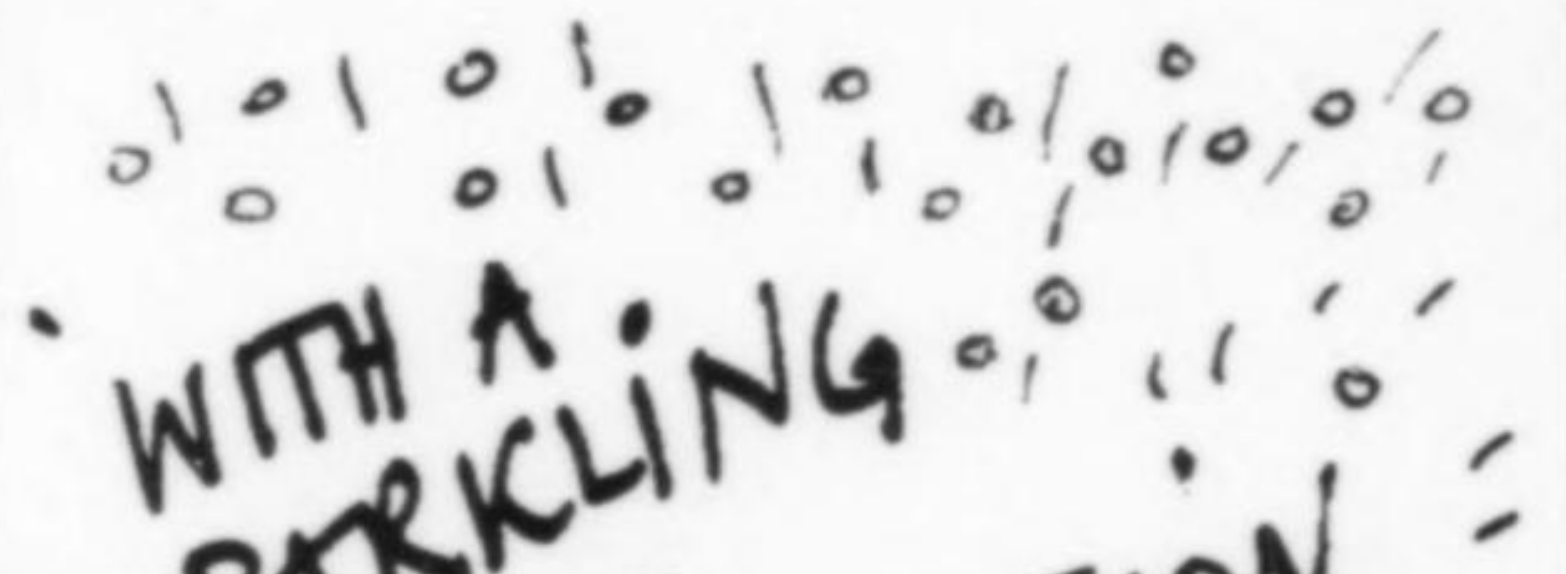

Aqua Libra is hard to stomach: Robin Young on "Yuppie Lucozade" problems for the future. Government figures have estimated that the population cohort over 85 will increase by 67 per cent by the year 2001, with no commensurate increase in the 18-64 working population. Not only will this lead to a marked increase in the numbers suffering from dementia (to be augmented by those developing premature dementia as a result of HIV infection), but the implications for the tax burden on the remaining working population gives pause for thought.

The combined health and social service cost of the over 75s stands at £1475 per person per year, compared with £270 for the 0-15 age group. Add to this high levels of unemployment and earlier retirements, then the pressure on taxation levels will be difficult to resist.

The door opened. "I'm sorry that I took so long," said Jane, "but I have to bolt and lock the door or else she tries to get out. She's a real wanderer lately." Mrs Jacobs knelt in the doorway of the living room, a handbag on either arm. Dr Rathbone walked towards her, held out a hand and said "hello". "Hello," mouthed Mrs Jacobs, backing into the room. Following her lead the doctor and the nurse walked into the living room, and sat down on the sofa. Mrs Jacobs stood over them, staring into their faces. The doctor said she needed to speak privately to Jane about her mother, but Jane insisted that it made no difference where they spoke as her mother was oblivious to all around her, and her aunt was fast asleep.

The consultant was kind and concerned. "How do you manage to get out to the shops?" she asked. "Well, to be honest," replied Jane, "sometimes I just lock all the doors and windows on my mum and aunt and hope for the best. I've no other choice. I can't always use the shops across the road because they are so expensive. At least once a week I go to the supermarket. It's ten minutes there and ten minutes back, with twenty minutes to get the shopping. I just rush as fast as I can and hope to God that they're okay. Other than that I never go out since mum's been here. I could always leave my aunt, but there's no way I can leave mum for more than a few minutes."

Dr Rathbone gently eased Mrs Jacobs into a chair, holding her hand all the time, speaking slowly and clearly. "I'm the doctor. I just want to have a chat with you, to see how you are. My name is Daphne. What's your name?... What are you called?" After a short pause Mrs Jacobs muttered a name that sounded like "Mandy". "That's a nice name," said the doctor. "... Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday..." continued Mrs Jacobs. Jane told the doctor that her mother's name was Doreen and that she hadn't been able to remember it for months now. She had been taught the days of the week by a helper at a lunch club she had once attended and they had stuck in her head ever since.

The doctor asked a few more questions. Mrs Jacobs didn't know her daughter, her grandson, the year, the month, how old she was, or the name of the person asking all the questions. She couldn't recognise a watch, the TV or a pencil. All she really knew was that she was 16 and that she was waiting for her boyfriend to arrive to take her to the seaside. She clutched her handbags close to her chest and told the doctor that the strange woman (Jane) stole all her things and was trying to poison her.

"Mrs Jacobs didn't know her daughter, her grandson, the year, the month or how old she was"

Some hours later, once the visitors had gone and after nearly choking on the tinfoil from the chocolate bar she ate with her tea, she began to cry. "I'm sorry," she said to her daughter, "for being such a foolish old woman." Soon the tears dried and she was lost again, waiting for her sweetheart to arrive and take her for a walk along the sweep of the bay.

In some respects Jane was lucky. The area in which she lived provided a range of support services for the carers of the demented elderly. An immediate two week relief bed was arranged at a local hospital. This would give Jane a break, allowing her to recharge her batteries and assess her options. Dr Rathbone suggested she give thought to the possibility of a regular programme of relief breaks coupled with day centre care.

Nonetheless, Jane's experience may become the exception rather than the rule as "planning blight" caused by doubt over future policy inhibits the growth of new services.

There is more than a little irony in the fact that one question dropped by psychiatrists assessing dementia concerns the identity of the current prime minister. It had to be axed from the assessment because too many demented elderly people were getting it right.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward likes short books—and long ones sometimes

When Sean French reviewed John Irving's *A Prayer for Owen Meany* in these pages he called it "an almost alarmingly bulky book". Waldemar Januszczak, talking face to face with the author on TV, dared to remark that "Three quarters of the way through one of your novels is a long, long way."

It's a common complaint. Back in the forties there was a character in the art world in London, Jack Bilbo, who ran a gallery. Years before he had written the book called *I carried a gun for Al Capone* and he took it into his head to write an autobiography. It was privately printed in large type on thick paper and had a fat red padded binding. It was alarmingly bulky.

He sent a copy to Herbert Read, a revered critic in those days, and poor old put-upon Read screwed himself up to return it with a note that said: "Dear Mr Bilbo, Thank you for sending me your book. It's such a pity that I only like small books."

We all know how he felt. In the last century when novels were inordinately long and were usually published in three volumes, Charles Darwin, who did all his reading in bed, would reach for his jack-knife that had accompanied him on the *Beagle* and slit awkwardly large books down the middle for easier handling.

Fiction is of course under the control of the writer (though novelists tell me this is an illusion), so prudent authors keep it down to 80,000 words. But if their reputation or their publishers' expectations make it a potential block-busting best-seller, they are positively encouraged to go on and on. And there is the odd book that the reader finishes with acute regret that it doesn't have just a few more chapters.

With factual books it's different. The research dictates the length, though I've been told endlessly by all the obvious firms that this or that proposal is marvellously interesting but more suitable to a Sunday magazine article than an actual book. I too have had the humiliation of cutting a book down to size on the publisher's orders. Snip, snip, and out goes that precious nugget of hard-won information, scrupulously gathered. I put these bits aside in the vain hope that some-one will some day commission a book out of the left-overs. I have also read books where it is obvious that the poor author was itching to tell us more, but had been forcibly truncated.

On the other hand I'm always reading books which, with intense sympathy for the author, I just find too long. From a sense of duty I have just finished Alan Stanton's *Invitation to Self Management* (Dab Hand Press, £6.95). The cover says "This book will change the way you feel and think about your workplace", so it is important. It tells how the Newcastle Family Service Unit changed from being a conventional hierarchy to a co-operative, self-managed body. The trouble is it is 384 pages long.

I don't deny that long books have their uses. Panicking at Heathrow at my folly in bringing only boring books, I bought Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities*. I'd got halfway by Pittsburgh and thankfully put it aside in America where I travelled by train and could look out of the window. I would have finished it on the way back, but for the fact that my neighbour was a bankrupt and voluble plant hire contractor from West Virginia who was picking himself up, dusting himself down, and starting all over again. His tale was more salutary than Tom Wolfe's and I haven't had the heart to pick up the book since.

But the best story about long books comes from Ashville, North Carolina. Tom Wolfe's namesake, Thomas Wolfe, came from there, and his mother had a boarding-house. When the oral historians were compiling their classic *Our Appalachia*, they learned that for this reason the family was looked down upon. But what about her son the novelist? The old lady next door replied, "I've read parts of *Look Homeward, Angel* and I had a complaint that my father made about a book once. He said he didn't like the ending. I said, 'What's wrong with the ending?' He said, 'It's too far from the beginning.'"

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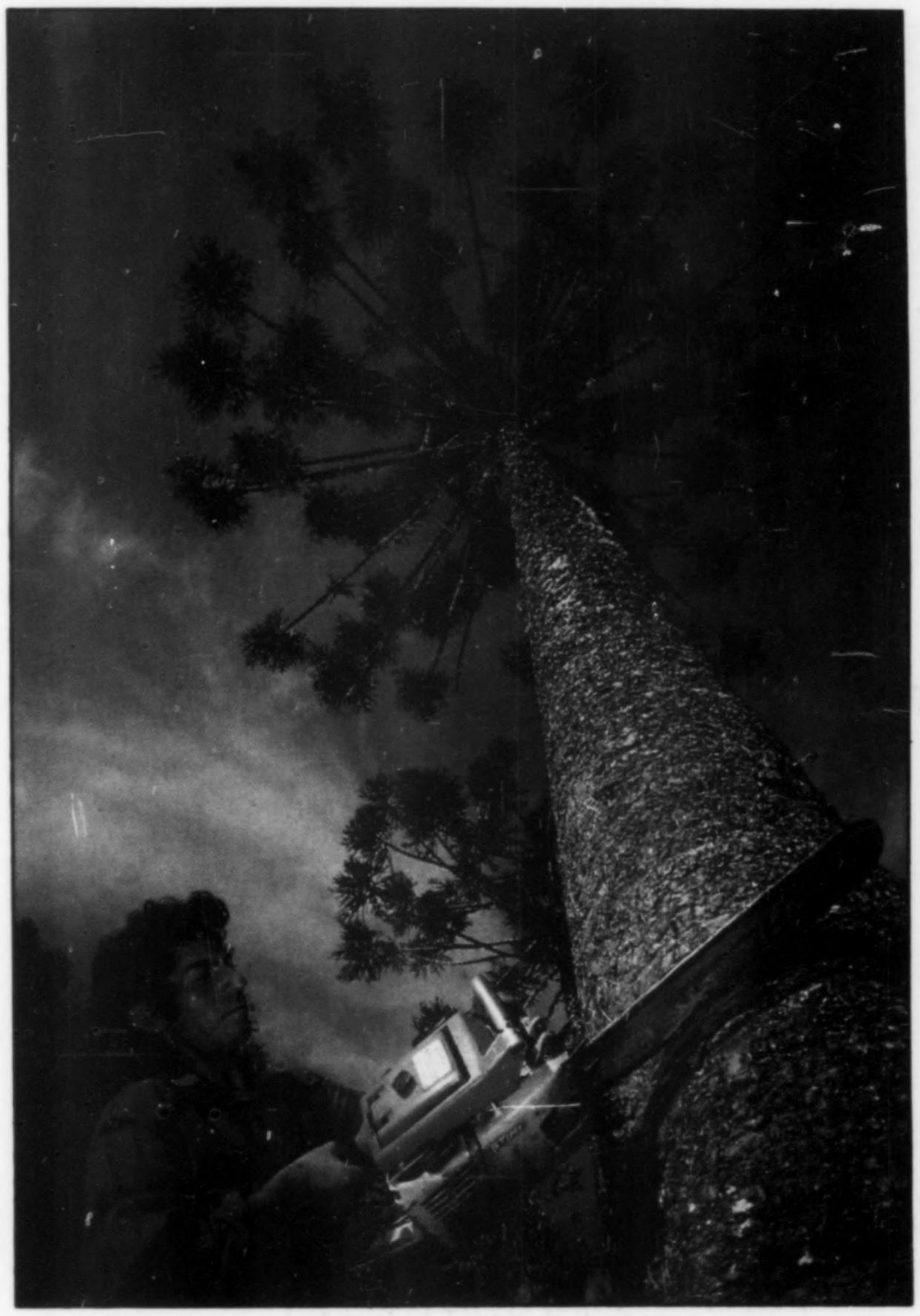
Fate of the rainforest



The first world has moved in to make fortunes out of the rain forests. The Indians and rubber tappers have other ideas. Meet the people who risk their lives in the struggle

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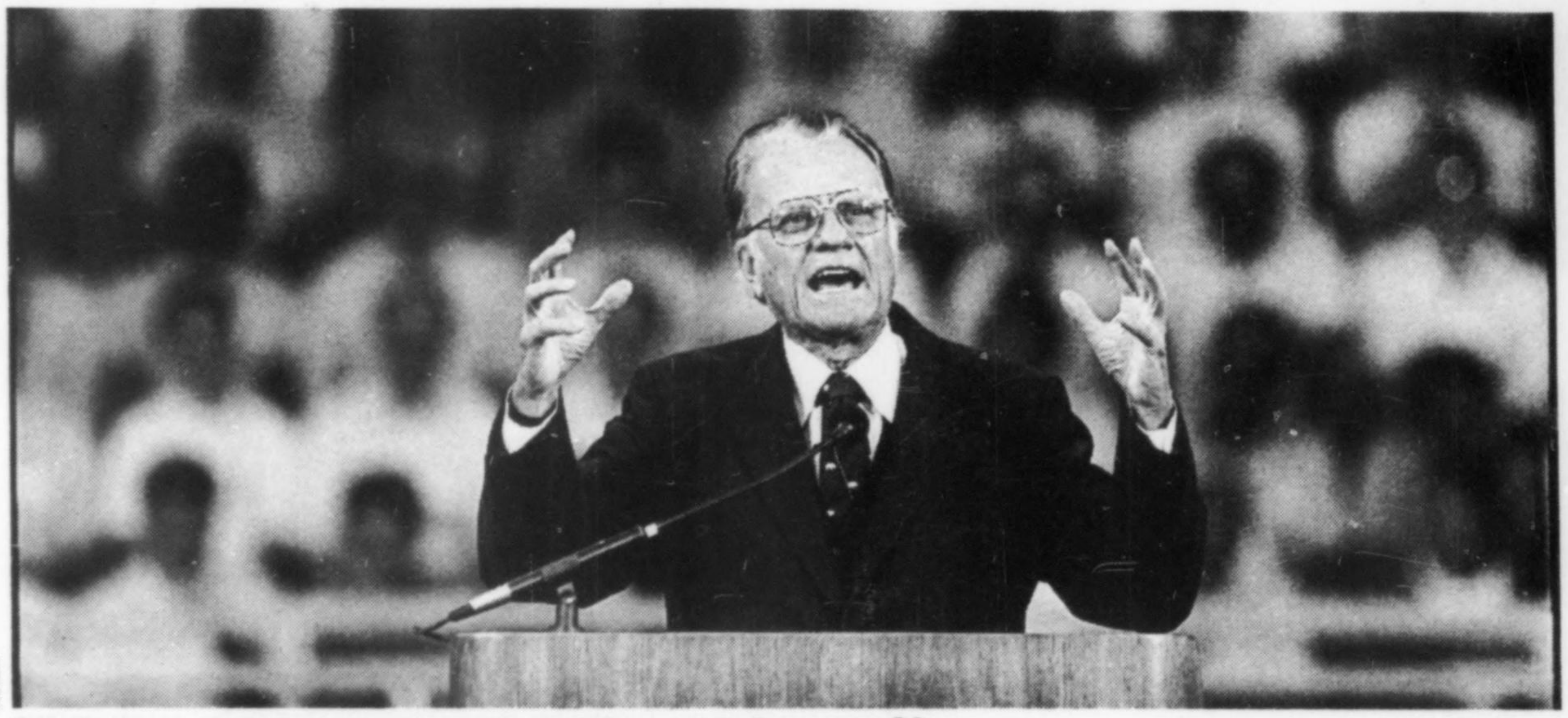
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Houses of healing

Paul Gordon finds R D Laing's followers still committed to therapy without psychiatry

Few organisations have emerged unscathed from the sea changes of the last decade. The Philadelphia Association, which provides a therapeutic environment in ordinary housing for people in severe mental distress, has not only survived but has kept its ethos of respect for the person against the reductive forces of conventional psychiatry.

Set up 25 years ago the Association (named after the ancient Greek for brotherly or sisterly love) continues to provide places of asylum, in the true meaning of refuge. There, as part of an everyday existence, people can find their own place in the world in their own time. But increasingly, the Association has had to contend with a context which has threatened its unique work.

The PA has been mainly concerned with those experiencing acute psychotic episodes, often diagnosed as "schizophrenic". Now many seeking a place in a PA household (about two people every day) are the fall-out of the closure of the large mental hospitals. According to PA community psychotherapist Chris Oakley, they "have been institutionalised into the world of the hospital, the inhabitants of the back wards. They want, not so much a therapeutic community, as a roof over their heads." Though the PA's three London bases can only house 18 or so people at any time, they receive several hundred enquiries each year without any effort at publicity.

The lure of greater involvement with statutory agencies has been powerful, particularly in a period of financial constraint. Social services grants for community residents, for instance, would bring in cash for more houses. But, since these depend on a medical diagnosis of mental disorder, it would also mean colluding with what psychotherapist Haya Oakley describes as a "process of psychiatric invalidation".

Greater integration with statutory agencies would also mean adopting what Chris Oakley calls a "technological ethos" preoccupied with a notion of "progress", where people have to be seen to be "getting better" after an arbitrary set period. "It is very seductive to have money, to get on the treadmill of the myth of progress and have more and more houses and be in a growth industry. But this would not just be a matter of selling our souls, but of indelibly going down the wrong path."

Such involvement would also mean bureaucratic regulations which would turn ordinary households with a therapeutic purpose into official hostels. Chris Oakley says: "If someone is giving you a grant, tucked into that, implicitly or explicitly, is some form of surveillance."

A major problem has been access to property. In the squatting heydays of the late 1960s and early 1970s, people loosely associated with the PA would establish communities in empty houses which would become part of the Association. Such days are gone, and it has become more difficult to obtain large houses. Even short-life property, on which the PA also relied, is less available. (At present, two of the PA's three households are provided by housing associations.)

> *"It is very seductive to have money, to get on the treadmill of the myth of progress"*

The Association itself not only survived the departure some years ago of its charismatic founder, RD Laing. It did so to remain, against the spirit of the times, a truly collective project. The households continue to be run by those who live in them. There are no rules (other than about paying rent) and no programme, although community meetings involving therapists attached to the households form a crucial part of any week.

The Philadelphia Association still offers hope to an especially vulnerable group. Central to its work is a faith in the everyday. For Haya Oakley its continued existence testifies to the need people have for a "genuine ordinariness of the human environment, that we so absolutely take for granted, which accepts people as they are and doesn't presuppose how they should be before we accept them."

A collection of papers from the Philadelphia Association, Thresholds Between Philosophy and Psychoanalysis, was published this month by Free Association Books, price £30.00.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward finds a belated change of educational heart in the Tory shires

We were met to discuss rural problems, and the scandal of village primary school closure, raised here more than once, was brought up once again. Lord Y. was worried that moves to make schools responsible for their own budgets would provide yet another excuse for shutting them down.

I thought him wrong since anyone involved knows how accountancy can prove just what the paymasters want proved. But the matter was settled by a very experienced County Planning Officer. "Don't worry," he said, "it's going to drop off the agenda in a flash." His reason was that village school closures were Tory vote losers, and in my county at least, he has turned out to be right.

In 1986 Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education, issued a draft circular telling local education authorities that only in exceptional circumstances should primary schools with less than 60 pupils be retained because they would lack "the necessary range of mix of teacher experience and curricular expertise". It was widely used, just as he knew it would, to justify the closure of this or that rural school among the 1,500 to 2,000 affected.

Then on the eve of the 1987 General Election, after the councils had made their decisions, Mr Baker withdrew the draft circular, saying that his Department's views were "...not to be interpreted as narrowly prescriptive or as providing a set of benchmarks for the closure of schools". He placated the rural voters with the remark that "I recognise the wide degree of support that many rural schools command within their local communities."

Our local voters thought there was new hope for their school when the minister remarked on the radio that "Closing a school does not save as much as you'd think. The local authority has to expand another school or lay on transport." Exactly what they had been arguing. If they believed they had converted him they were mistaken. For the moment the general election was over, Mr Baker issued a new circular, saying nothing of the kind and telling local authorities that "Schools of any size with a substantial proportion of surplus primary places incur disproportionately high unit costs in maintaining under-used capacity."

My own councillor, Alan Crockett, first resigned from the Education Committee, and then failed to seek re-election, because he could not stomach the council's policy on school closure. The county council chairman, Sir MacDonald Miller, lost his seat since his local Conservative Association refused to re-adopt him because he had sanctioned the closure policy. The Conservative candidate who succeeded him was defeated in the county elections last month by an independent candidate who had led an unsuccessful struggle to save the threatened Reydon High School.

Quick as a flash, on the eve of the county elections, the chairwoman of the education committee told the press that further closures of small schools in Suffolk was "unlikely." It was reported that "She attributed this change of direction to the success of groupings of between four and ten small schools, using shared expertise such as a science or music teacher...Adopting a county-wide approach to this, by supporting these kinds of initiatives, was now seen as an alternative to school closures and a way of delivering the new national curriculum in small schools."

This is a neat bit of double-talk, concealing the political necessity that has made all the arguments previously used for the closure of my neighbouring Polstead School out of date. Those local parents who wore themselves out in the struggle to keep it open will want to know whether the closure next summer, confirmed by Mr Baker, and the expansion of another school at a cost of £250,000, are really still to happen.

No foundations have been dug, no contracts let. Couldn't Suffolk County Council, bereft of its former chairman, just climb down an inch or two, in a gentle, neighbourly, recognition of political realities? And if not, why not?

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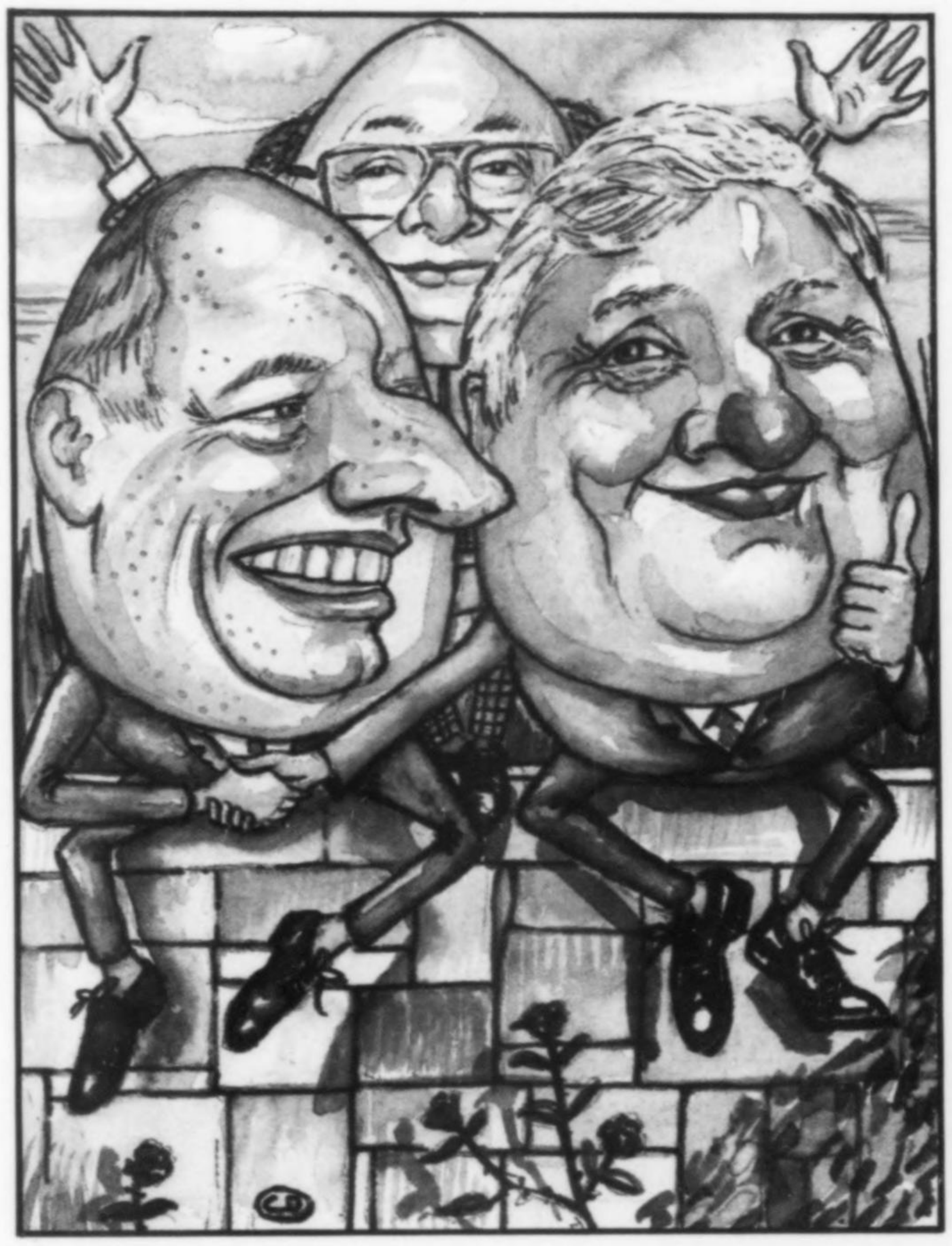
Before the fall



Labour are rejoicing too soon. Two party politics hasn't returned. The Tories are secure in their heartlands. And Kinnock remains Labour's largest liability. R W Johnson tells some unwelcome truths

Studs Terkel celebrates The Grapes of Wrath

The lowdown on Germany's neo-fascists

Tom Nairn's Bywords: Yuppies

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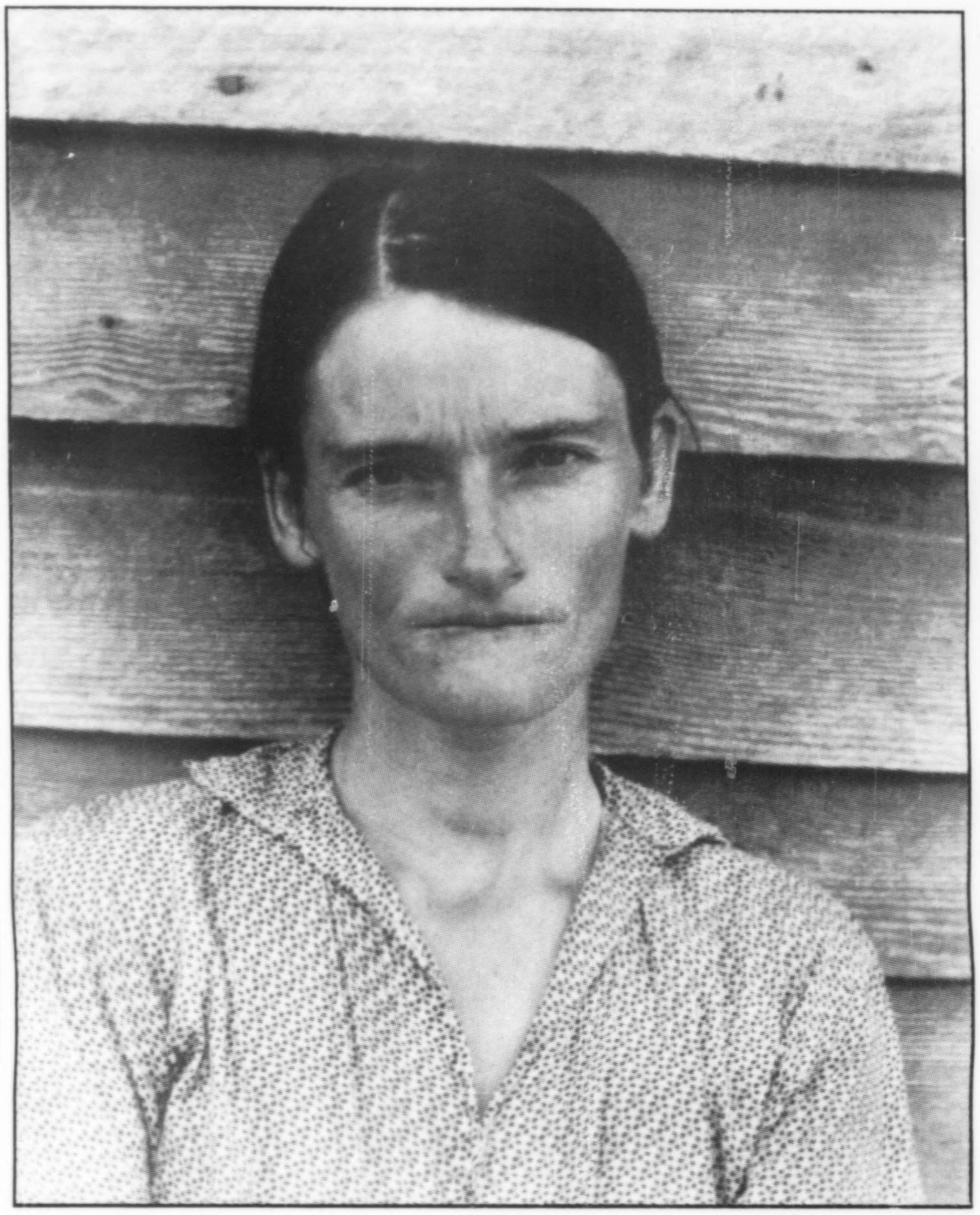

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profit-making provision, it would be simple by catering only for children over eight to avoid registration and inspection altogether. A cut-off age of 14 in certain types of daycare is therefore being recommended by the NSPCC and daycare reform group at report stage.

David Mellor, minister of health, said at committee stage when announcing the cut-off age of eight: "I hope the members of the Committee will consider that this is another encouraging example of our using our ears as well as our mouths in discussions." In the interests of the children the bill aims to protect, the government must continue to listen.

Childcare Now!: a campaign to raise standards of UK daycare provision to that of other European countries, can be contacted at 4 Wild Court, London WC2B 5AU.

Rushing into snap judgments

Six national childcare organisations are urging MPs to vote against the government when the Children Bill reaches report stage in the Commons. They oppose a government amendment which will enable a court to authorise a child's immediate removal from home, even though there is no evidence of harm or likely harm to a child. Among the objectors are the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and Family Rights Group.

The amendment introduces a new ground for the Emergency Protection Order (EPO). Where a local authority receives information or suspects that a child has suffered harm, and their inquiries about this are frustrated by being denied access, that denial, providing it is "unreasonable", will, of itself, be grounds for making an order. This change widens the grounds for making such orders. It moves well away from the notion that removal should occur only where there is *evidence* that a child has suffered harm. It provides for the removal of the child in order to check whether the child needs to be removed.

Researchers and practitioners alike have expressed concern about the way Place of Safety Orders are used under the present system. They stress the damaging effect on children of sudden removal. The government review of child care law and the white paper which followed it were clear in recommending that removal should occur only where there was evidence of immediate risk to the child. If this amendment is passed there is real danger that children will continue to be removed inappropriately from their homes.

The new measure does provide that under an EPO, social workers should remove children only if they consider it "reasonable" to do so. BASW and others point out that the majority of social workers placed in that position will not be experts in child protection work. They will be unlikely to take the risk of leaving children at home when the level of anxiety has been such that an order has been applied for.

The amendment was introduced in response to continuing pressure for a "child assessment order". The essential elements of such an order, as proposed in the Kimberly Carlile Report, were that it would require parents to take their child for a medical examination within a short period of time. This is very different from the government amendment, which means that children will be removed in order to be examined.

Organisations opposed to it are supporting a new clause, to be introduced at the report stage, providing for a "child production notice". A statutory notice served by local authorities on parents would require them to produce the child within 24 hours. They believe this is a far better way of ensuring the protection of children from abuse.

"The amendment provides for the child's removal in order to check whether the child needs to be removed"

In introducing the amendment at committee stage, David Mellor seemed to lay great emphasis on the fact that both the NSPCC and the Association of Directors of Social Services were in agreement with them and with each other. Obtaining agreement between these two powerful bodies has apparently led the government to forget the words of Lord Justice Butler-Sloss in the Cleveland inquiry report, that "a child is a person, not an object of concern." The proposals are contrary to the spirit of this principle. *Mary Ryan*

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward salutes Leopold Kohr and the economy of beans and dumplings

Leopold Kohr likes to tell the story of Cesar Andreu Iglesias. He was Secretary General of the Communist Party of Puerto Rico, an unpaid post, and supported himself in an ordinary humble job. In the McCarthy period of the early 50s, the House Committee on Un-American Activities in faraway Washington lost Iglesias his job. Instead of surrendering to "the masochistic joys of self-righteous grief", he moved to a mountain top, lived on rice and beans and single-handedly built himself a house.

With a house and a rice-and-bean diet but no job he spent the next six months writing a book which brought him honour and prestige; and "a succession of bourgeois literary prizes that opened the door to more congenial sources of employment." It's a tale bound to appeal to Kohr, who is 80 this year, and has spent his adult lifetime as a teacher of economics. He subverts the conventional wisdom of his subject by presenting the unfashionable virtues of self-help *and* community mutual aid.

A similar message was preached by Proudhon, who wrote of his childhood in the mountains of Jura, "In my father's house, we breakfasted on maize porridge; at midday we ate potatoes; in the evening, soup, and that every day of the week. And despite the economists who praise the English diet, we, with that vegetarian feeding, were fat and strong. Do you know why? Because we breathed the air of our fields and lived from the produce of our own cultivation."

Kohr was born in the village of Oberndorf, near Salzburg, in the doomed years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In that city, as a schoolboy in the bleak days after the First World War, he learned that "though a dumpling with a little sauce, a slice of stone-hard black peasant bread three weeks old, or a bowl of lentil soup, are not much to look at, they can form both an adequate and an enjoyable meal."

He was a newspaperman on the losing side in the Spanish war and emigrated across the Atlantic. After the war, visiting his native village, he found that his old neighbours had survived once more on a dumpling diet. "Aware that it costs as much to subsist in idleness as at work, they began by diverting their underexercised labour power from analytical tavern oratory to the rebuilding of their houses. They added floors or constructed new homes altogether." Dumpling-fed labour power and dumpling-produced raw materials had enabled them by the use of their own direct labour to reach a *Wiener Schnitzel* level of affluence "far beyond the reach of the high-cost *financial* resources available to the middle class." They built their own *social* capital.

A small city-man, Kohr spent decades as Professor of Economics at the University of Puerto Rico, moved to become a humble extra-mural tutor at University College, Aberystwyth, and now lives in Gloucester. As the Puerto Ricans left by the boatful for the slums of New York, Kohr preached in vain in the local San Juan press the philosophy of small-scale renewal by the inhabitants.

It's a nice birthday tribute that a Welsh publisher has just produced a stylish collection of those articles from San Juan, *The Inner City, From Mud to Marble* (£4.95 from Y Lolfa Cyf, Talybont, Dyfed SY24 5HE). Why bother, since no-one took Kohr's advice back in Puerto Rico? Because he was ahead of his time and credits readers with sense to see that "the problems and solutions illustrated against the background of Buen Consejo, La Puntilla, or San Juan are the same as those of Boston, Calcutta, Pimlico, or the docklands of Gloucester and London."

In a week that sees the publication at a local level of Douglas Porteous's *Planned to Death: The annihilation of a place called Howdendyke* (Manchester UP), and at a global level of Hernando de Soto's *The Other Path* (I B Tauris), about the importance of the informal economy in the third world, Kohr's paradoxical common sense turns out to be not just timely, but even newsworthy. I hope he celebrates with a really tasty bean and potato stew, with dumplings.

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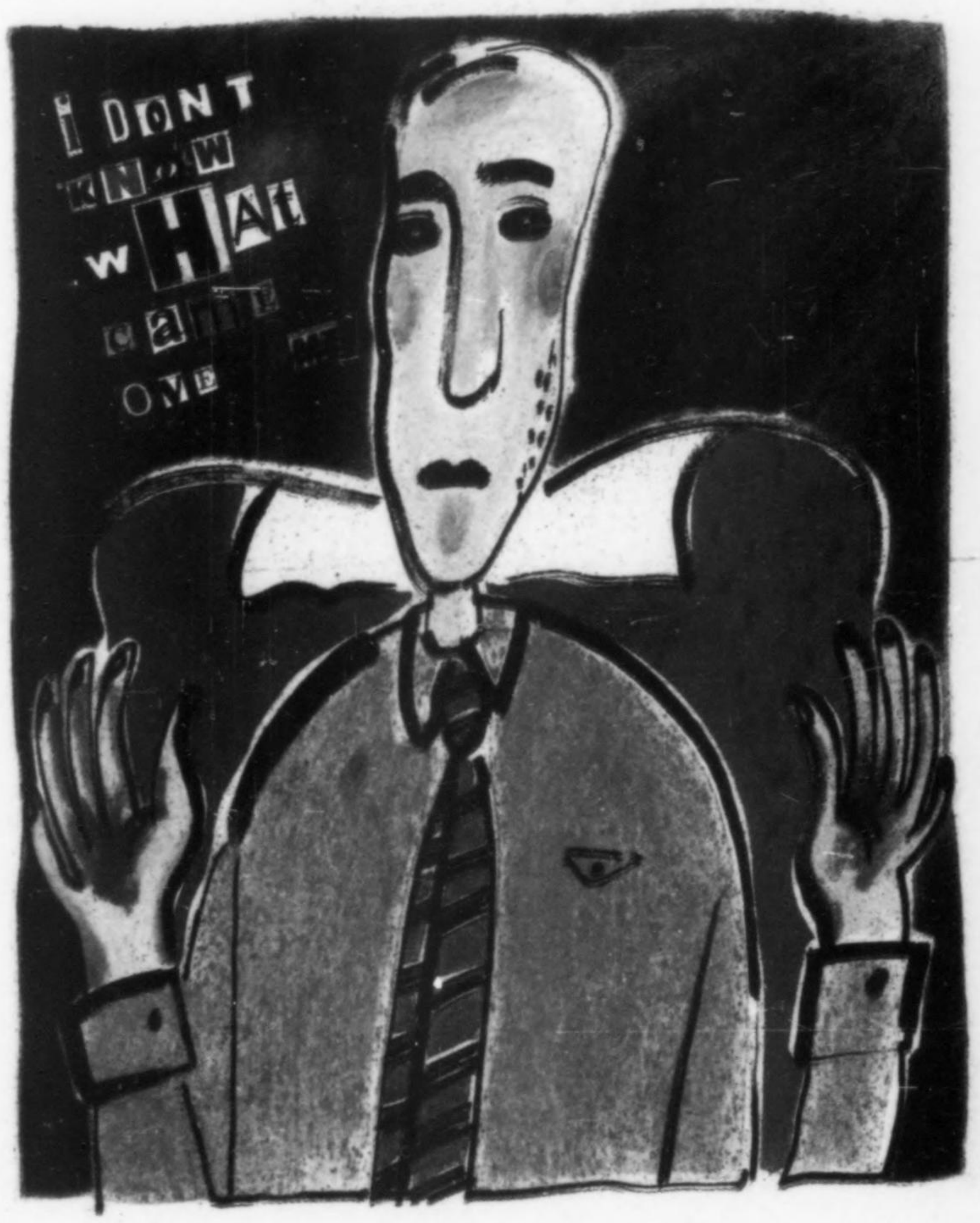
Perfect murderers



Every three days a woman is murdered by her husband or lover. The killers are usually quiet men, like Peter, who bottle up their emotions. Peter was voted the perfect family man. But he strangled his wife. Why?

Bea Campbell on televising child abuse. David Caute celebrates Thomas Paine. Food and sin: Ros Coward confesses. David Marquand: what's left of the centre? H A Turner: who's left in Hong Kong? Judith Williamson dissects New Times

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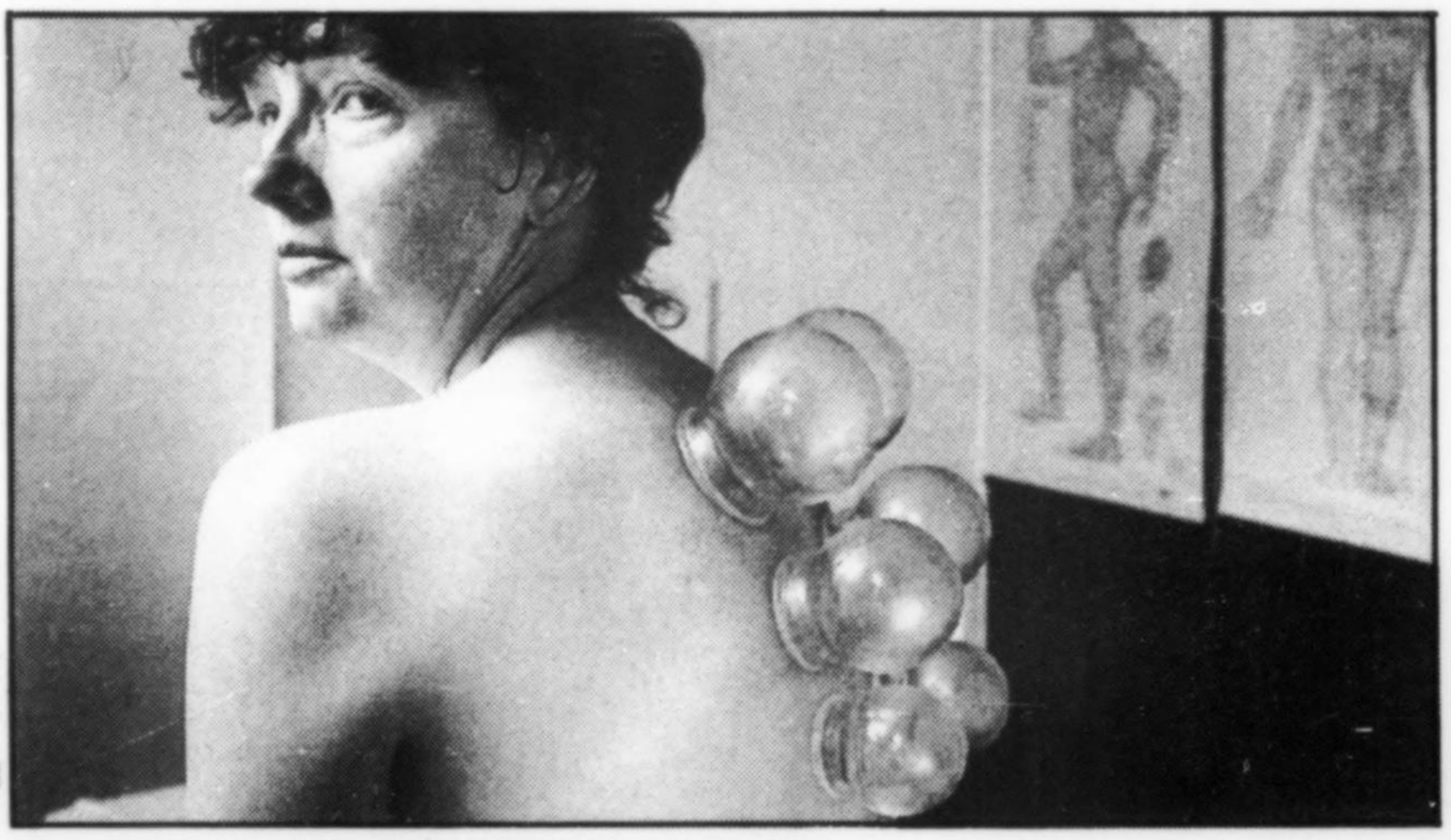
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Shutting the asylum doors

Treatment of Kurds marks a low point in immigration policy, say their lawyers. Nick Fielding reports

On Wednesday 28 June seven Kurds who were due to be flown back to Turkey because their cases for asylum had been rejected by the Home Office were given a temporary reprieve. A High Court judge granted an application for judicial review of the Home Office decision. These Kurds were the lucky ones.

Another 3,500 Kurds from the south east of Turkey have arrived in Britain since 1 May but the flow has now stopped. On 23 June new restrictions were introduced after one month's notice, which require all visitors from Turkey (and, incidentally, Haiti) to obtain visas in advance.

The Kurds are leaving their homes in south-eastern Turkey mainly because they fear persecution (see "Perfidious Albion", *NSS*, 30 June). Many of those arriving here show clear signs of having been tortured.

Government ministers have continued to argue that the Kurds are seeking entry into Britain for economic reasons. To this end they have made life for those seeking asylum as difficult as possible. Some immigration lawyers now believe that the British government is in contravention of the 1951 United Nations Convention on refugees.

A team of immigration officers was sent to Turkey in May and June to try to prevent potential asylum seekers from boarding planes bound for Britain. In numerous other cases passengers were given cursory interviews on the airport apron in Britain and returned to Turkey without being allowed off the plane, despite holding documentary evidence to support their claim.

Those who were allowed to enter the country have hardly had things easier. More than 200 are presently being held in prisons and detention centres around the country—many of them some distance from friends and supporters in London. There have been hunger strikes in at least two prisons and at least four of those being held have suffered injury during their captivity. One of them, Gazi Ates, allegedly had his hands tied with wire following a forcible arrest at Heathrow airport.

There have also been accusations levelled at the Home Office interpreters. Some of the Kurds speak Turkish, but most speak Kurdish or a mixture of Turkish and Kurdish. The Home Office has only one Kurdish interpreter and lawyers believe some of the Turkish interpreters are not accurately translating what they are told. In once case a man who was initially refused asylum has had the decision reversed because of such "mistranslation".

Ulrike Preuss/Format

The lucky ones?

The refugees who have been given temporary leave to remain face a wait of many months and possibly years before a Home Office interview can decide their cases. During this time they are not entitled to work. So far 36 people have had their applications rejected and 28 others have left "voluntarily", according to the Home Office. Some of those deported have been arrested on arrival in Turkey.

On Monday (3 July) the Home Office established a special unit to deal with the Kurds. There are fears that it will be used to harass and deport as many as possible. Kurds living in church halls and other temporary refuges in the London boroughs of Islington, Haringey and Hackney, are unlikely to settle down to normal life.

Chris Randall, the solicitor for the Kurds whose case went to the High Court for judicial review, is very disturbed by the government's attitude: "This really is a low point. It is hard to see how they are attempting to comply with the convention on refugees when they have been deliberately trying to prevent Kurds from travelling." Now, with extra restrictions, they don't need to bother.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward praises quiet philosophers

Forty-one years ago I began to receive, on an exchange basis for whatever I was editing, an eight-page soberly printed weekly from Los Angeles called *Manas*. A note in each issue explained that the title came from a common root suggesting "man" or "the thinker", and that the paper was "a journal of independent inquiry, concerned with study of the principles which move world society on its present course, and with search for contrasting principles."

The format never varied. There was a front page piece, an inside editorial, a feature called "Review", one called "Children and Ourselves" and another called "Frontiers". Nothing was signed, since "*Manas* wishes to present ideas and viewpoints, not personalities".

When I ceased to edit anything I still received it, two months late as it came by surface mail, thanks to the kindness of its editor, Henry Geiger. I only found out who he was through occasional correspondence both ways over permission to quote.

Readers quickly learned which of the thinkers of the past most influenced him. The first was Socrates (just as it was for the late I F Stone). He was followed by Lao Tse, Buddha and the authors of the Hindu scriptures, a series of Renaissance authors like Pica della Mirandola, plenty of later heroes: Jefferson, Tom Paine, Thoreau, Ortega y Gasset and Gandhi; and a host of contemporaries: Arthur Morgan, Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil, Abraham Maslow, John Holt, Paul Goodman, and E F Schumacher.

The list of names indicated Henry's mental map of what was worth thinking about. On 16 February this year, I got the last issue of 1988 with an announcement, quiet and anonymous as ever, that publication was ceasing, and thanking helpers and friends: "We can think of no more satisfying career, yet no work that is more demanding." I airmailed Henry at once to pay my tribute to his endless circulation of good ideas, but later heard from his colleagues that he had died on 15 February, aged 80. There were no obituaries, they explained, as he wouldn't have wanted it.

Piecing fragments together I learn that Henry had little formal education, had been in the chorus on Broadway, was a conscientious objector in World War II, and was a trade journalist and commercial printer. He had been a reporter on a weekly magazine for shopkeepers, visiting retailers and attending their conventions. Writing of himself in the third person as usual, he recalled that: "The paper he worked for had become part of the lives of these readers. But when the paper went monthly, all that changed... So when it came to starting *Manas*, this editor laid down a rule—do a weekly in order to have an impact on people's lives, or do nothing at all."

Now, before the war, in Whitechapel, David Rose pubished a paper for the clothing trade industries called *The Sewing-Machine Times*. After the war he went back to the printing shop to restart it. In the meantime, as the anarchists had found it harder and harder to get a printer during the war, they had bought the firm, with the old machinery buried in fallen ceilings. Mr Rose had the good luck to talk to my dear old friend Philip Sansom. "Sure, I'll bring out your magazine", he said, and, like Henry Geiger, he did so from 1946 to 1986. Then he retired.

But the readers, once in the mainly Jewish trades, and now in predominantly Bengali-run businesses, wrote to Dave's daughter Daphne. They said that they *missed* those editorials with their homely philosophy attempting to relate the bread-and-butter of the needle trades to a wider view of human destiny. So Philip had to be dragged back as an editorial consultant responsible for inserting a broader message. Exactly what Henry Geiger did for his American retailers and then for 41 years for readers of *Manas*.

Philip Sansom approaches his readers with the same respect both for their intelligence and for their aspirations beyond making a living. Both these anonymous editors have an important message for those of us who live by peddling words. If you start with the assumption that your readership consists of citizens yearning to be philosophers, they'll return the compliment.

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Major efforts have been made by all the statutory agencies over the last few years to face up to the epidemic. A plethora of inter-agency coordinating committees has been set up. The Health Board has established a special Aids team and now has approaching a hundred staff concentrating on Aids work. It has been given a total of nearly four million pounds extra by the government.

The social work department has about 30 specialist staff, including a supported accommodation team. The District Council's environmental health department operates a special service to recover discarded syringes. There are about a dozen different voluntary drugs groups—some of which receive government support—scattered about the region.

The level of co-ordination between the various agencies now looks impressive, although competition for cash can still provoke backstage quarrels. The need or co-operation, and for the institutions involved to act very quickly, are perhaps the main lessons that Lothian can teach other areas.

"The requirement for resources is not the crunch issue," George Bath argues. "The crunch is prevention." He is particularly concerned about the ineffectiveness of the clean needle exchange schemes which were pioneered in Scotland. He reckons that they are currently used by less than ten per cent of established drug-users, a take-up rate which he describes as "perilously low".

One scheme is run from the outpatients clinic at Leith Hospital and is only open two hours a week on a Wednesday afternoon. The social work department in Craigmillar operates another which only opens for two hours on a Monday evening. Lothian Health Board has long been lobbying the government—so far unsuccessfully—to permit longer hours and extra schemes, including one based in the city centre.

There is concern, particularly amongst the voluntary groups, that the Scottish Office Health Minister, Michael Forsyth MP, is deliberately restricting operation of the schemes because he has political fears of being seen to encourage drug misuse. Some allege that as a result the Edinburgh schemes are "totally inadequate" and probably now less effective than those in the south.

Government opponents forcefully point out that drug abuse is predominantly a problem associated with social deprivation. As such, the solution has to include the devoting of more public resources to decent housing, decent jobs and the eradication of poverty.

The main fear for the future is that Aids will spread via former drug users with HIV to the wider heterosexual population. That is one reason why the Health Board launched a £60,000 advertising campaign on St Valentine's Day this year asking people to "Take care of the one you love".

The idea was to put across a positive message on badges, beer mats and balloons urging people to take care by getting to know their partners well, choosing not to have intercourse, using condoms if they do, and never sharing needles. It is too early to evaluate the campaign's inmates.

A unique Aids educational programme has also recently been launched in Edinburgh's Saughton Prison which is known to house a large number of HIV-positive prisoners. The prison authorities try to avoid segregating them from other prisoners.

The major difficulty in designing effective prevention policies is that huge areas of ignorance about the disease remain. Dr Bath complains, for example, that all Edinburgh's estimates of HIV cases are based on a self-selected population who have volunteered themselves for testing. There is no clear idea of how far the virus has spread beyond the known groupings of infected people.

> *"Some allege that needle exchange schemes are now less effective than those in the south"*

One crude attempt to remedy this has been the recent introduction of a system where all the region's pregnant women are invited to allow their blood samples to be tested for HIV. Unfortunately up to ten per cent of women are refusing, rendering the results virtually useless.

Dr Bath points out that Edinburgh discovered its Aids problem overnight in 1985 after a doctor tested people's blood anonymously and without their consent. He argues that more widespread anonymous testing is now required—perhaps of patients' stored blood samples—in order to give a clearer idea of how HIV is spreading. "To forbid ourselves this weapon of discovery strikes me as being crazy," he says.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward visits the house for Nicaragua

Asked what the project meant to him and the others, Johnny said: "It's a chance to live your politics, learn skills, decide your own work routines, meet a changing network of 50 to 60 people. Some even came from Leeds to help. It's been a focal point."

The house for Nicaragua began with Tod. He trained as an architect but dropped out as he didn't see any social usefulness in what he was learning. He and his wife bought a shed in Essex and slowly turned it into a house, she working days as a nurse and he on nights in a factory. It was too much, and they parted. But selling the house brought them £20,000 each.

He moved to south London in a squat that arose because the GLC had compulsorily purchased a street of old houses, dispersed the residents and left the buildings to rot, to provide for an eventual extension to an ILEA school. As demographers could have predicted, the school was not extended. In fact it has since closed. The squatters had rescued the street and like several of the best squats, became legitimised as a housing co-op.

I would rejoice that direct action had enabled them to build their own nests, but Tod is a sterner character and saw them as simply feathering those nests. "Surely," he argues, "some of the money made out of gentrifying areas like this should go somewhere really useful?" Six years ago he saw John Pilger's TV programme about Nicaragua: the hopes of its people and the obscene horror of the US government's intervention. This decided him.

He invested his particular nest-egg in buying a totally derelict two-storey 1860s house in Vauxhall, once a cobbler's shop, and set about its reconstruction with the aim of selling it and investing the proceeds in popular projects in Nicaragua on 19 July, the tenth anniversary of the Sandinista revolution. There'll be a Nicaragua Festival that day in nearby Spring Gardens, opposite the City Farm.

The house for Nicaragua won't actually be finished this week. But it will be soon. In five years of work, using the materials that the affluent society dumps in skips, Tod's team have rebuilt the house with magnificent oak doors and lovely staircases. From the dump outside Bankside Power Station they reclaimed mahogany floor blocks, each one of which has been stripped of its bitumen screed by patient volunteers.

Most of the walls have been finished by a gang of trainee women plasterers from Camden. Helen and Ruth did the balustrading. Judy made the stained glass in the kitchen. Tod has added a light and airy top floor with a balcony. The plumbing, electrics and central heating are coming along slowly.

Bluefields, Nicaragua's main Atlantic coast town (twinned with the London Borough of Lambeth) was devastated by a hurricane last October. People from the twinning group, and from this particular project, have worked there. The money from the sale of the house will be spent on the projects there that Bluefields people think are most urgently needed.

My impression of the place? Well, just because old materials have been used, it looks as though it has always been like that. An enveloping atmosphere of mellow brightness has been brought to a building that was derelict for a decade. It's a creative transformation. If you're a likely purchaser ring Trevor at 01-693 7467, leaving your number to make an appointment to view.

What will happen to Tod when the job is done? He describes his trade as that of a joinery refurbisher, so he won't be short of work. I suspect that he'll drift into some other ruined house and will gather another bunch of helpers around him to take on another hopelessly uneconomic, but beautifully enterprising, job.

He's a one-man revolution, standing out against the spirit of Britain in the 1980s. "I like the idea of giving away a house," he told me, "and I enjoy the fact that people see it as something quite shocking and outrageous." I hope he'll go on shocking us.

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Beyond the fringe

Hanif Kureishi: England, your England

Football and politics: Stuart Cosgrove on Glasgow's tribalism

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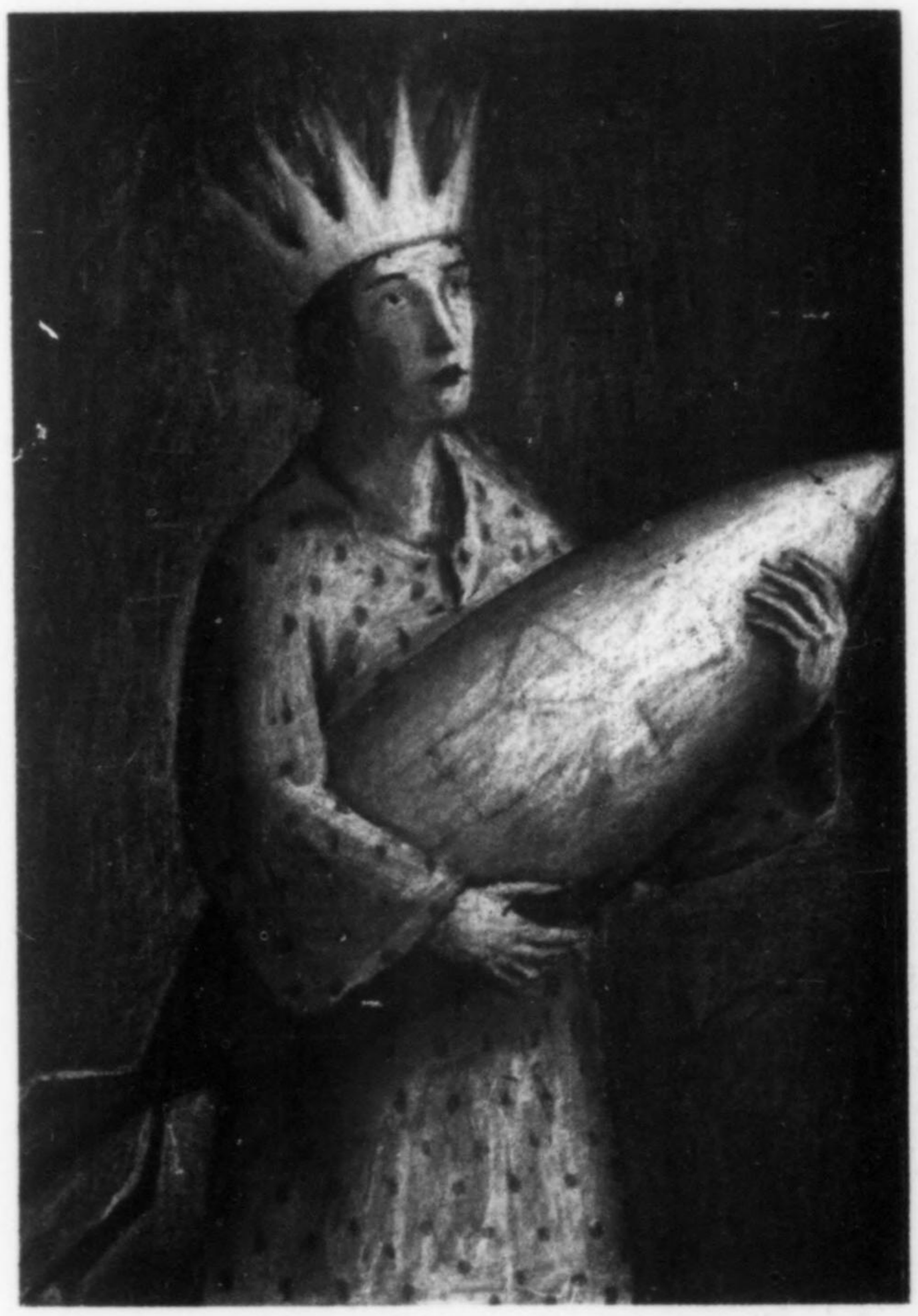
Duncan Campbell on Paul Foot



Do you want to buy a personal nuclear weapons system? Set up a police force in your back yard? Establish your own apartheid state? Meet the people who think you should be able to do just that

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phic timebomb which makes it imperative to get more women into the labour force. Surveys suggest that many unemployed lone mothers would like to work, given the chance. But the income support system inherently discourages them, thanks to its paltry £15 earnings disregard. Any amount above that figure is deducted from their benefit pound for pound.

Even an increase in the disregard limit, or an allowance for childcare and work travel costs (both ideas are on the drawing board), would merely give back to lone parents some of what they have recently lost. As a group they've suffered disproportionately from cuts in the real value of child and other benefits. Without full-time childcare, the only jobs available to them are generally part-time and low paid.

There are also ideological problems with the return to the job market. As one researcher into poverty and single parents—Joan Millar, of Bath University—has recently asked: is it possible to break the link between poverty and lone parenthood without, in the process "severely undermining or even destroying the 'family' itself"?

A substantial body of Conservative opinion is certain that the answer is no. Fifties-style theories of maternal deprivation run deep, and are likely to act as a barrier to applying compulsion, in the form of availability for work tests, to get single parents to give up the benefits book.

Stepping up efforts to extract maintenance payments has a broader populist appeal. John Moore recently told the Commons Social Services Committee that it "was not moral or practically tolerable" that three quarters of absent fathers pay no maintenance, particularly when only around eight per cent of the missing millions payable to lone parent claimants is recouped by the DSS.

The government has been looking at more effective ways of enforcing maintenance payments, for example through the attachment of earnings via the tax system. Many theorists and one-parent organisations cautiously back a system that would allow the mother to see some of the money, rather then have it deducted from her benefit.

But not everyone is so sure. Jonathan Bradshaw, of York University, has been conducting DSS-sponsored research into the living conditions of lone parents. He believes the whole area of enforced maintenance payments is a minefield. "It runs counter to the concept of the clean break between couples encouraged by recent divorce legislation. Women in estranged relationships frequently want nothing further to do with the man, particularly where he has been violent." There is also the economic impact on the man's second and third family (one third remarry within two and a half years of divorce), not to mention the civil liberties implications of blood tests to prove paternity.

One way of solving the poverty/lone parenthood conundrum has not yet been considered. It's called remarriage, or—more fashionably—family reconstitution. It costs the state nothing and has the added advantage of causing no-one moral offence. How silly of us not to have thought of it before.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward watches badger-watchers watching badger-baiters

Our neighbour Corinne was thrilled to see unmistakable signs that a new family of badgers had recolonised the site. There were the piles of excavated soil, the scratch-marks, the little pits of dung, and a series of new holes leading to the sett.

Like a real enthusiast she set about an evening watch, following all the rules the badger-watchers scold us about: treading softly, presenting no silhouette and staying down-wind, as badgers tend to rely on their ears and noses rather than their eyes. She had no luck and the nights grew chillier.

There are two kinds of badger-minded people. The first love the badger like the huntsman loves the fox. Fox-hunters enjoy braying about giving their victims a sporting chance in the chase. Badger-baiters have no such hypocrisy. They want to be sure it has no chance at all. For badgers are strongly built creatures and though content to stay out of the way and live an exemplary family life, can bite back at anything remotely their own size.

Dogs are wary. So what do badger-diggers and badger-baiters do? Years ago Rennie Bere of the Cornwall Naturalists Trust described how they would trap a badger, mutilate its jaws, set a dog against it to show that there was nothing to fear, and then encourage the dogs, all unsuspecting, to tackle their prey in the wild.

Nobody eats badgers, nobody uses badger bristles for toothbrushes or shaving-brushes any more, so they had to be accused, on sparse evidence, of killing lambs and poultry. Then in stepped the Ministry of Agriculture, claiming that badgers were carriers of bovine tuberculosis. Everyone in the badger world declares that this assertion has yet to be proved. But it gave a shoddy legitimisation to the badger-diggers, badger-baiters, badger-shooters and badger-gassers. At last their sport was OK! They were public-spirited citizens.

Fortunately the manic extermination of badgers provoked a response. Not just in the 1973 Badgers Act and the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, making them a protected species, but in the formation of Badger Groups in every county. In Kent, Chris Ferris has spent 23 years watching badgers and also watching the "lampers and lurchers". They found that the animal was quickly dazzled and frozen by a bright light and consequently encouraged their dogs to run down the beam of a powerful torch.

This year the Shropshire Badger Group reported that gangs were coming from far outside the county bringing their dogs and betting heavily on them, or taking badgers away for fights elsewhere. Tom Austin of Shropshire RSPCA says that some would pay £500 for a live badger. "What people tend to forget are the terrible injuries suffered by the dogs as well."

The second group of badger-minded people are these defenders, alert to the endless threats to their habitat. When the distributor road around Penzance was doubled in width recently they were able to insist on a badger tunnel. Two photographers spent 12 hours of darkness with an automatic camera to make sure that it was being used. And when a developer proposed a deer farm at Pebmarsh in Essex and claimed that the existing badger sett threatened his livestock with tuberculosis, the Essex Badger Patrol and the Nature Conservancy Council successfully contended that the badgers must stay undisturbed.

You can hardly blame the badger-watchers for being over-pessimistic about your chance of observing them. But from everything I hear, badgers seem to be, if anything, too trusting and bold. In an absorbing diary of watching in a suburban park outside Edinburgh in the current issue of *The Countryman*, Tom Gray notes how every TV programme on badgers brings out a new surge of watchers and disturbance, but how they tolerate it all. "These urban badgers seem able to deal with unlimited pressures." A frivolous linguist friend, Charlie Tait, suggests that the coming of the Channel Tunnel will give them greater mobility, since 'badger hounds' (which is what the German term *dachshund* means) are getting rarer. *Dachs* in German originally meant 'skilled construction worker'.

Last month my wife was with a group of friends near the Lizard in Cornwall, rejoicing that plants we no longer see in the attenuated hedges of East Anglia were flowering there. It was broad daylight. There was conversation and no concealment. What could those animals frisking around possibly be? Then she saw. The same thing happened to our neighbour Corinne. One day she had a letter from the Inland Revenue that drove her into a paroxysm of frustrated anger.

She rushed out into the garden to calm down. And there of course, not at all disturbed by her, was the whole family of those elusive badgers.

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Foreign exchange

European integration means hassle-free travel and the end of passport controls. Instead they'll be checking on you all the time. Read how governments are devising computer systems to tell each other about you

At home:
With the Gatwick sun-seekers; law and disorder in Liverpool; Weldon, Hattersley and the Muslims

Abroad:
Strikes in Siberia; the FBI and Robespierre; reggae sun-splash in the Caribbean

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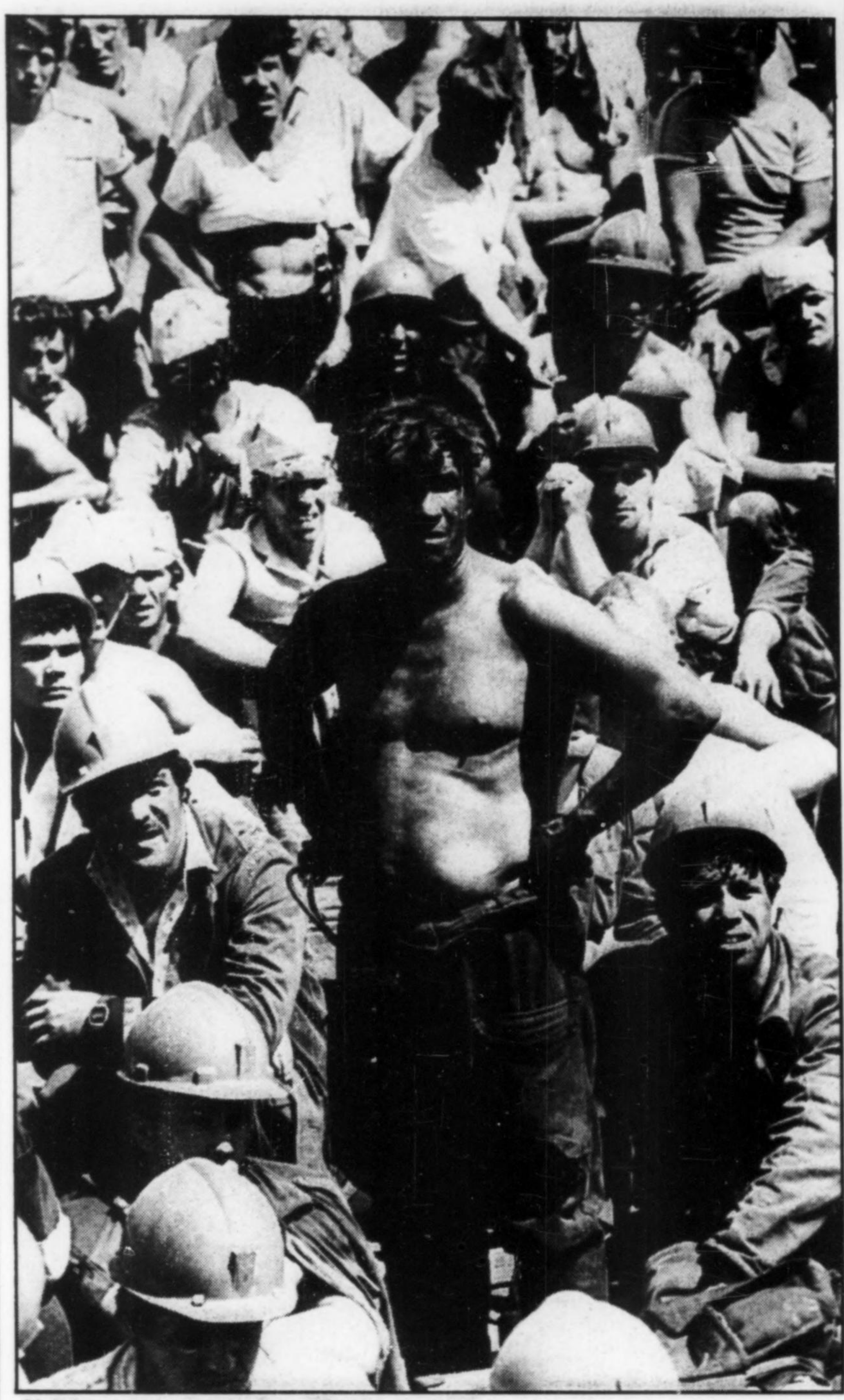
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power. The technology is highly energy efficient and will virtually eliminate the gases which cause acid rain. Wakefield council, concerned to provide jobs, is actively considering the proposal and the NUM is receiving enquiries from other authorities.

These developments alone will not reverse the union's acute difficulties. As Ruth and Jonathan Winterton point out in their account of the 1984-5 miners' strike, *Coal, Crisis and Conflict*, the problems today are the result of a deliberate strategy by the government to restructure the industry and destroy the union.

Jonathan Winterton, a lecturer in industrial relations at Bradford University, stresses that the effect of this policy has been to reduce our coal reserves from 300 years' supply to 50 years. "Just as Arthur Scargill predicted, and MacGregor categorically denied, they've destroyed more than 70,000 jobs since the strike, and by March 1990 they will have closed around a hundred pits. It is technically impossible to re-open these pits, so the coal in the ground has been sterilised for ever."

The loss of membership, and revenue resulting from the Conservatives' policy means that the NUM has to merge. But this is by no means a counsel of despair. The TGWU organises workers in oil refineries and oil distribution, in the power stations, in open-cast mining (which the government is boosting at the expense of deep mining), and in nuclear power. Northern college lecturer Ruth Winterton says: "There has to be a resolution of the undoubted conflict between the different sectors of energy production. Right-wing unions like the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union (EETPU) and the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AEUW), which support nuclear energy, might make difficulties, but an energy alliance within the TGWU would be a productive starting point."

These developments are taking place at a crucial time for "green" technology. As the government spends £4.5 billion to decommission the ageing Magnox nuclear reactors, the CEGB's experimental power station at Grimethorpe has already demonstrated the effectiveness of the pressurised FBC system. The board now wants to test the theory that adding a gas turbine to the existing steam turbine will increase energy efficiency by another 5-10 per cent. The Americans and the Swedes—who have poached expertise from Grimethorpe—are already building this advanced system, and a gas turbine awaits assembly in Lincoln. But the British government has been dragging its feet on the £11 million that is needed in extra research funds.

Former energy minister Cecil Parkinson has recently announced that he had come round to supporting the application, but the decision rests with Mrs Thatcher. The idea of promoting coal-based, non-polluting power generation, backed by a "green alliance" including energy trade unionists, will be a severe test of the sincerity of her pro-environment stance.

Jonathan and Ruth Winterton, "Coal, Crisis and Conflict: the 1984-5 miners' strike in Yorkshire" (Manchester University Press 1989 £13.95)

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward frets over the Stalinisation of education

Orwell used to say that Stalin's Russia was like the family that slept in one bed. When Father turns, we all turn. Old Soviet hands would bring back tales of how the fabulously expensive electricity plant imported from the west was rusting away on site because word had come down from on high that the underground gasification of coal was the new technique for solving energy needs.

British Secretaries of State for Education are the ultimate educational Stalinists. Not merely did a Labour holder of the office decree universal comprehensive secondary schooling while educating her own daughter outside the system (just like Stalin): her Tory successor, the fumbling free-market advocate, changed everything at a stroke of the pen.

The 16-plus exams, GCE and CSE, were to be replaced by GCSE, and not just soon but at breakneck speed. Sir Keith Joseph's decision came at a time of teacher demoralisation through disputes over pay and conditions, and cuts in resources. Funds, previously denied, magically appeared to enable them to change track instantly, as the first year of GCSE pupils and their parents learned overnight.

Publishers worked overtime, changing the textbooks. DES spokesmen were trotted out, just like Squealer in *Animal Farm*, to explain that everything was going swimmingly. If only those damn teachers would all pull together.

If we must have exams, the GCSE was a good idea. This has nothing to do with Lord Joseph. It was the work of the Schools Council, one of those quangos abolished with reforming zeal by the incoming Thatcher government, only to be reconstituted with new names, carpets and furniture under direct government control. Across the curriculum the Schools Council had worked on experiments to reform the old GCE, based on the needs of the small minority of school leavers who seek university entrance. The old CSE, a sop to the rest of us, was a bit of paper not recognised in the job scramble.

In science, maths, the arts and humanities, dozens of School Council projects had tried out learning-by-doing, assessment by course-work as well as the fatal exam day, and stressed techniques of inquiry rather than the memorisation of facts and figures. Well, if it's good, said Joseph, every last school and every last child should do it this way. And by next term, too. No arguments. We're the bosses.

GCSE came in. Teachers toiled to meet the new norms. But before they'd got through the first year, Joseph was put to bed in the Lords and in came Kenneth Baker. It was like *Yes, Minister!* The high-ups of the DES and the Inspectorate got together to decide how to please the incoming Secretary of State. It was also the precise equivalent of the Politburo, since they had enough experience of the Ministry of Truth (actually Elizabeth House in York Road, put up by an architect later jailed for corruption), to know that the incoming minister would want every British child to be taught the way he was taught. He'd made it, hadn't he?

So the National Curriculum was cooked up, unencumbered by that hangover of research and experimentation in the 1960s and1970s. Like the last attmpt to electrify the citizens, it is to be implemented at breakneck speed. "No time to be lost, comrades!" as Stalin said to the Stakhanovites. Take the sciences. To get your pupils through, they must stop experimenting with samples from the local river and start memorising the table of chemical elements. You do want them to pass the test, don't you?

The principles behind GCSE will go down the memory hole, except where they paradoxically survive in the private sector. In history, pupils may be dissuaded from messing around with social or world evidence, so that they can commit to an exam paper the saga of British achievement.

The Soviet Union has a National Curriculum. Last year's history exams had to be cancelled because, with *glasnost* and the message that the official version was composed of lies, distortions and omissions, the new version has still to be written. What alarms me is the way our own smooth-tongued, gentle, educational Stalin lays down a party line and the whole panoply of educational administration willingly concurs. It's a chilling example of the way nations trickle slowly into the hands of the thought police.

As Mr Baker departs, the DES is putting out "contracts" (in market language) for the development of SATs (standard assessment tasks) for children at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16. Successful "bidders" for the millions handed out to implement the Generalissimo's views will undoubtedly modify the crudities of this approach, just as Soviet functionaries had to modify their master's prejudices to keep the system going. The results won't be as dreadful as I might have feared. They will just limit the chances of innovation and advance. Schoolchildren are automatic saboteurs. But so, fortunately, are their teachers.

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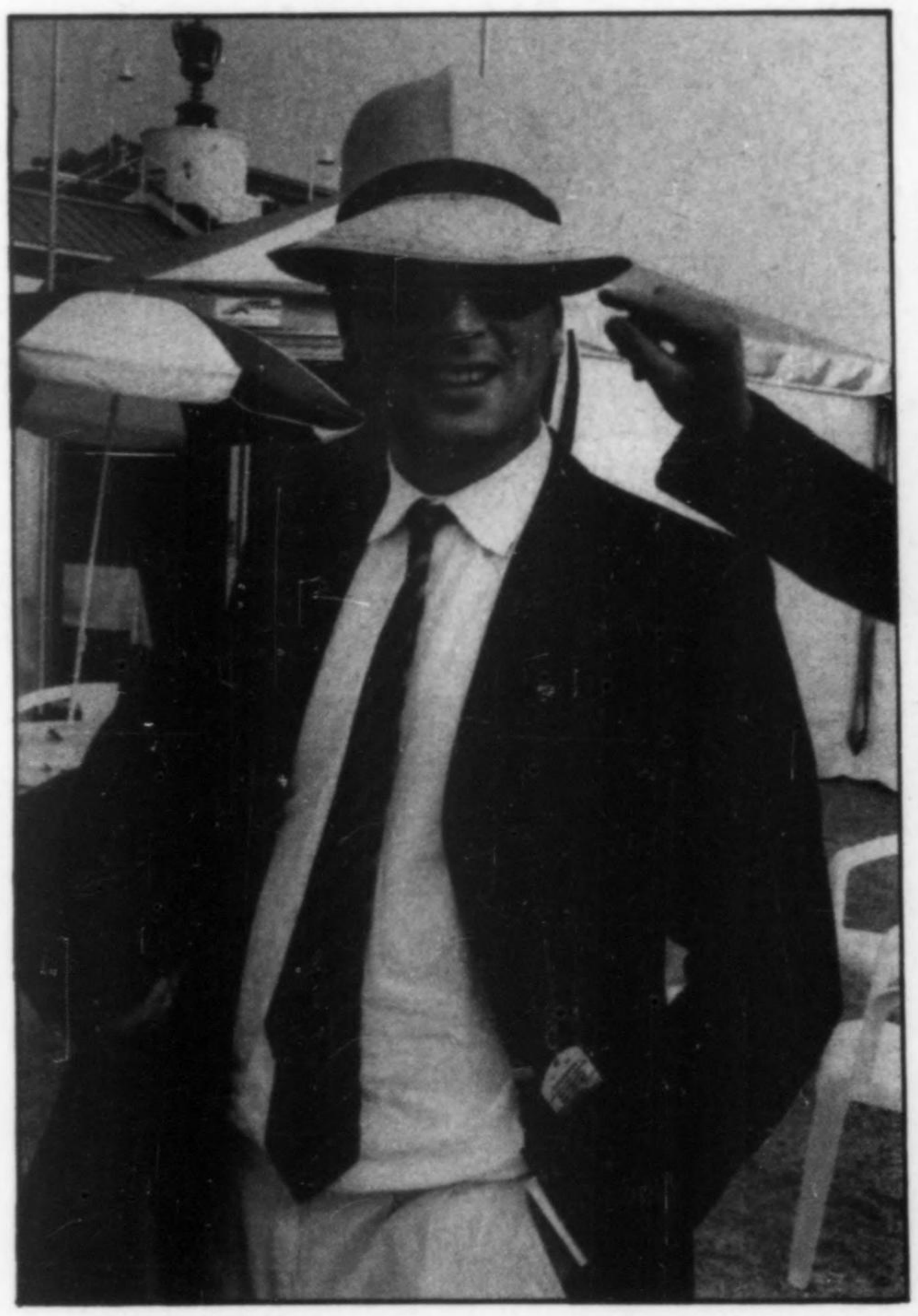
Business and pleasure



Woo your client with a champagne-sodden day at Goodwood. If that doesn't soften him up, take him hot-air ballooning, rally-car racing or to a celebrity banquet. Corporate man is letting his hair down

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Due to a paper shortage, *NSS* has temporarily had to be cut back to 48 pages. Apologies to our readers. Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible

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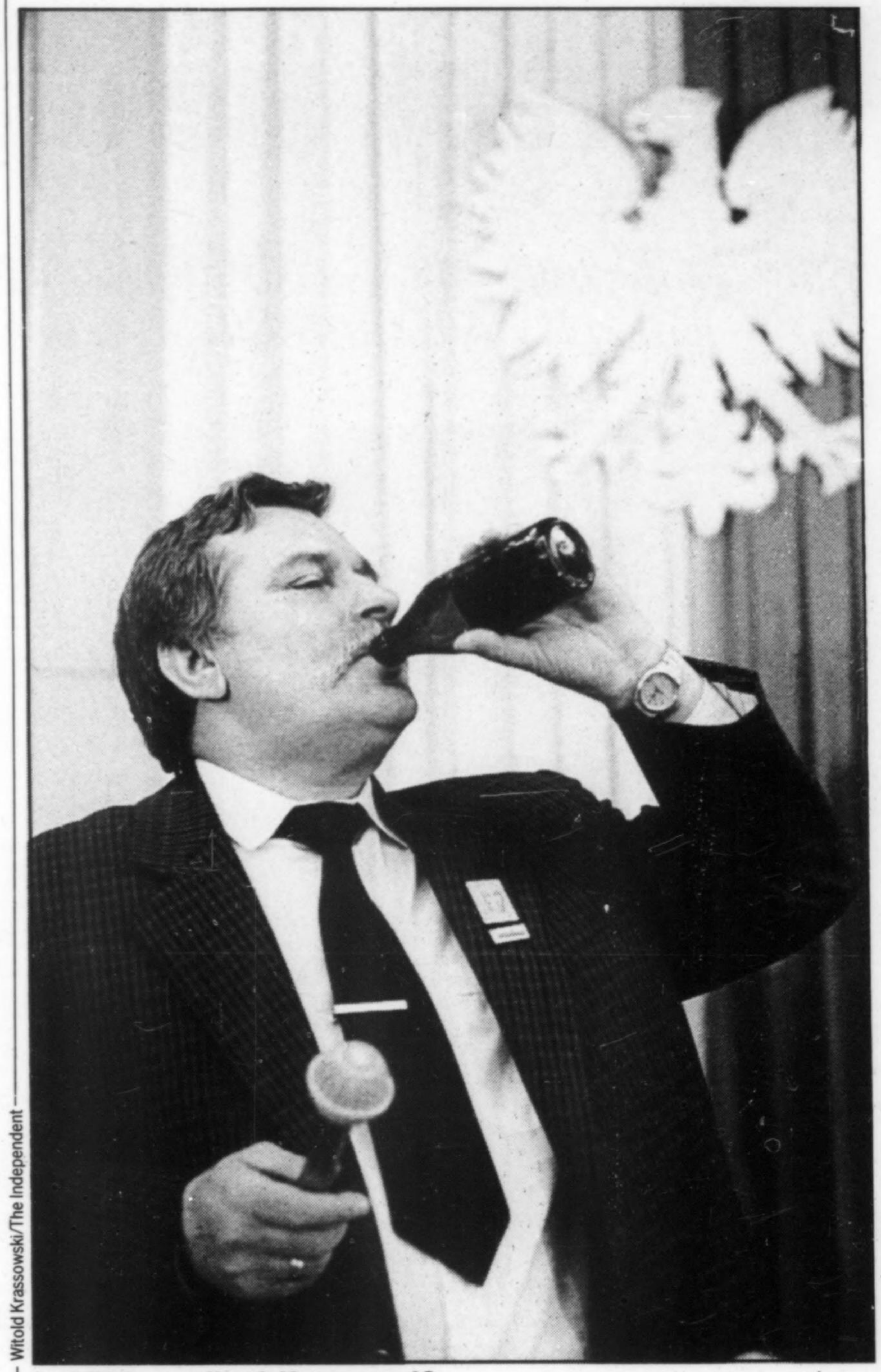
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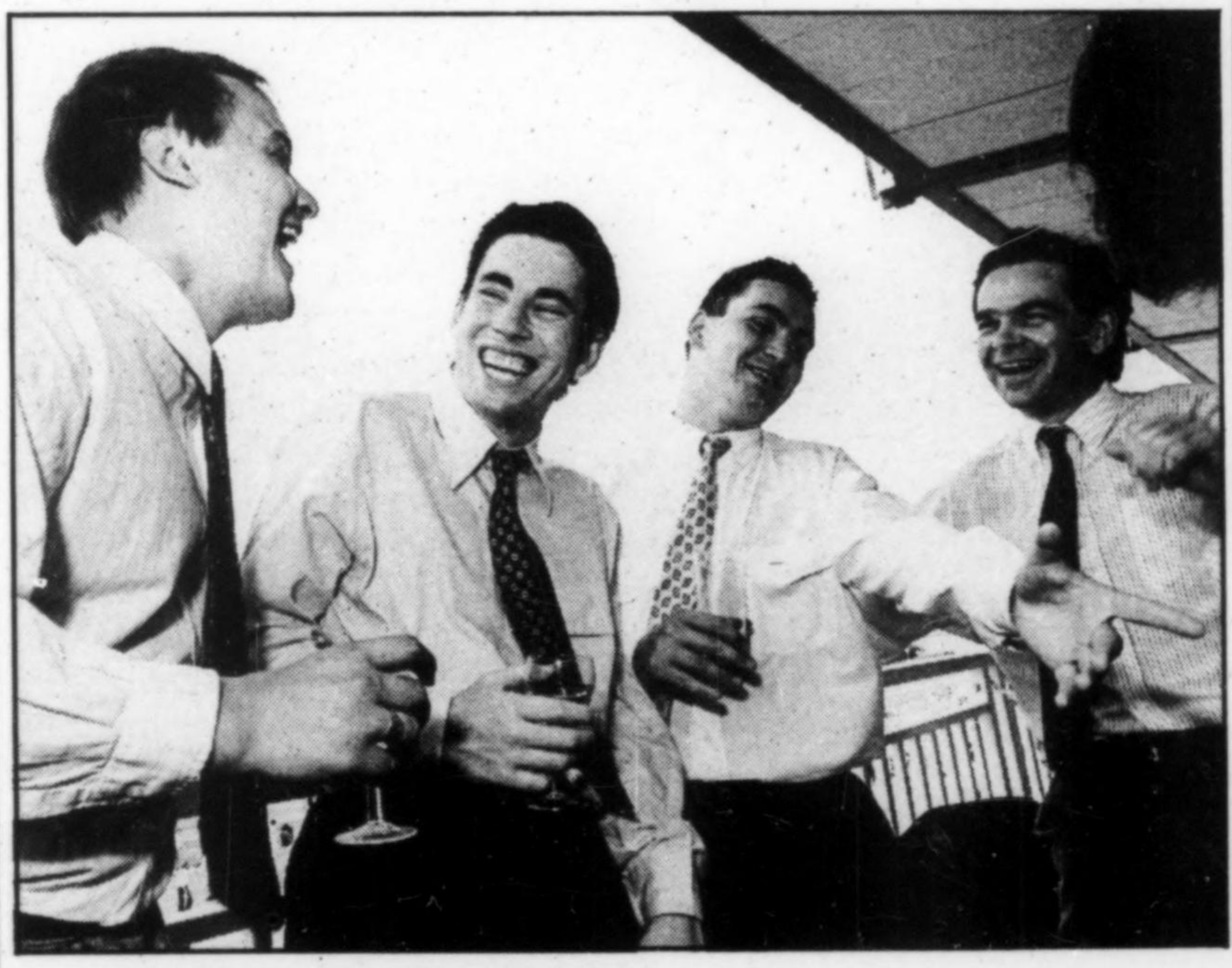
Melanie Friend

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Welfare Watch

The last resort

Inspectors have softened the social fund, says Tony Lynes

The social fund commissioner, Rosalind Mackworth, has produced her first annual report (HMSO, £4.90). The commissioner's job is to appoint inspectors, advise them and monitor the quality of their decisions. Review by an inspector is the nearest that social fund applicants get to a right of appeal.

Both the inspectors and the commissioner were invented during the debates on the 1986 social security bill to justify the absence of appeal rights. They were generally regarded as cosmetic rather than functional. Inspectors were to be appointed from within the DSS, the commissioner was to be appointed by the secretary of state, and funding for both was to come from the DSS budget.

As already noted in this column (10 March, 1989), the inspectors have displayed more independence than anybody expected. In nearly half the cases reviewed by them during the year, they either made a different decision or, more often, pointed out defects in the decision-making process and sent the case back to be reconsidered by the social fund officer (SFO). In nearly half these referred-back cases, the SFO awarded payments averaging nearly £260.

The inspectors were not overworked in their first year. They received less than 3,000 applications, out of 72,000 cases where the social fund officer had refused to alter his decision. But things now seem to be hotting up. This mainly reflects the dramatic upturn in applications for community care grants (CCGs). Efforts to mop up unspent local office budgets before the end of the financial year produced over 48,000 applications for CCGs in March, of which 57 per cent were successful. In April and May, applications continued at a high level, about 43,000 per month, and in June there were nearly 53,000, posing a serious threat to the 1989-90 social fund budgets.

Officers have responded by adopting much tougher policies. Refusals of CCGs rose from 43 per cent in March to 57 per cent in June; and the proportion of cases where, on being asked to revise their decisions, they again refused rose from 65 to 76 per cent. As a result, applications for inspectors to review refusals of CCGs rose from 176 in March to 365 in June; but instead of supporting the clampdown, they confirmed only 29 per cent of refusals in June, compared with 40 per cent in March.

This trend, however, may be reversed. The decision to cash-limit the social fund was the main reason for not giving a right of appeal. In the last resort, the inspectors cannot protect claimants from the effects of the cash limits, which are binding on them just as much as on the officers. They can only be as independent as the law allows.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward is glad to have been inoculated against motormania

AS Neill's ready explanation of vandalism and hooliganism was that the young men involved had been prevented from playing out their childhood. Another great Scot, Patrick Geddes, had an equally thought-provoking explanation of adult acquisitiveness and the mania to accumulate collections. He thought that retarded adults had missed out as children on the ardent gathering of "pretty things", the gloating possession and the eager quests for more. Consequently they neglected the real business of adult life, just to work through this necessary childhood phase.

When it is gone through at the appropriate time: "Later life is immunised; the mind has been as it were vaccinated: the catharsis is successful." I find this an appealing idea, simply because it applies to me.

Between the ages of 11 and 14 I collected cars. Not model cars or even car numbers, just sightings and images of cars in their infinite variety. I would sit by the side of the Southend Road on busy weekends conducting, not a traffic survey, but a search for rare models and makes, of which in pre-war days there were multitudes. It seems impossible now, but there was once a time when cars were made in every manufacturing town in Britain, Europe and America. On a good day I might see a Star, a Steyr, a Stutz or a Studebaker, a Bean, a Beardmore and several bull-nosed Morrises.

My special favourites were the cars you could identify by sound alone: the Jowett from Bradford with its two-cylinder horizontally-opposed engine, or the train-driven Trojan. At the junk shop I would buy for a penny back numbers of the *Autocar*, the *Motor* and the *Light Car & Cyclecar*. I haunted car parks for the sight of a 1928 Hudson Essex, with its wooden-spoked wheels that kept the wheelwrights of New Jersey in business long after the horses had gone.

The mania left me as quickly as it came, but it immunised me in later life, just as Geddes predicted. In adult life I have never owned or driven a motor vehicle, apart from misadventures with a dumper during the war. But I still identify cars in old movies and admire the museum models rented to the film companies today.

And the back of my head is still lumbered with this discarded childhood luggage. I can tell you how the internal combustion engine was, like so many inventions, just looking round for its inventor, until it was patented simultaneously by Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler in 1884, and how they got together to form Daimler-Benz.

They had to, because everywhere in foundries and cycle-shops other people had started building cars. I can even tell you how, seeking to enter the French market with finance from the Credit Lyonnais, they renamed the car after the daughter of that bank's managing director, Mercédès; or how, when their racing cars were stranded in a French Grand Prix in August 1914, one was brought to Britain to provide the basis of decades of Rolls-Royce aero engines.

My attack of motor-mania coincided with the years when the Nazi government poured huge sums into Mercedes-Benz and its rival Auto-Union. This enabled them to win all the international motor-races and to buy in all the top drivers from Britain and France. Nuvolari remained faithful to Alfa-Romeo and simply stopped winning.

They were the days when every newsreel showed Hitler being driven through cheering crowds in his six-wheeler Mercedes-Benz. I developed a hostility towards the firm, and maybe that turned me off car-collecting altogether. Once in my life I have ridden in one. It was a taxi from Ipswich. I asked the driver why he had chosen so opulent and expensive a vehicle for such a workaday job. "Because I'll always get my money back," he explained. "People have this superstition that there's something special about a Merc."

And indeed they have. Every military dictator in Latin America has one. Watch the TV news and name the car that contained Gorbachev in his journey from the airport to the government palace in Beijing, or the president of Sudan through Khartoum, Pinochet through Santiago, Menem in Buenos Aires, or the whole lot down the Champs Elysées on 14 July.

There are plenty of posh vehicles around. Crowds of people who've arrived somewhere or other give high status to Rolls-Royce. Our local self-made entrepreneur had one, and when his fortunes temporarily failed, sold it. "Oh, it doesn't matter," he told me. "I've had one, that's all that counts," and he drove off in his new Mercedes. As for royalty, after Edward VII drove the first British-made Daimler, they stayed with that firm for half a century.

But in a world perspective it's the Mercedes-Benz that indicates that a ruler has really arrived. I always think of the Führer connection and wonder at the insensitivity. "You're very obtuse," said my friend Richard down the road. "Don't you realise that *they're* the firm that makes a guaranteed bullet-proof model?"

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Northern Ireland: Out of the Impasse

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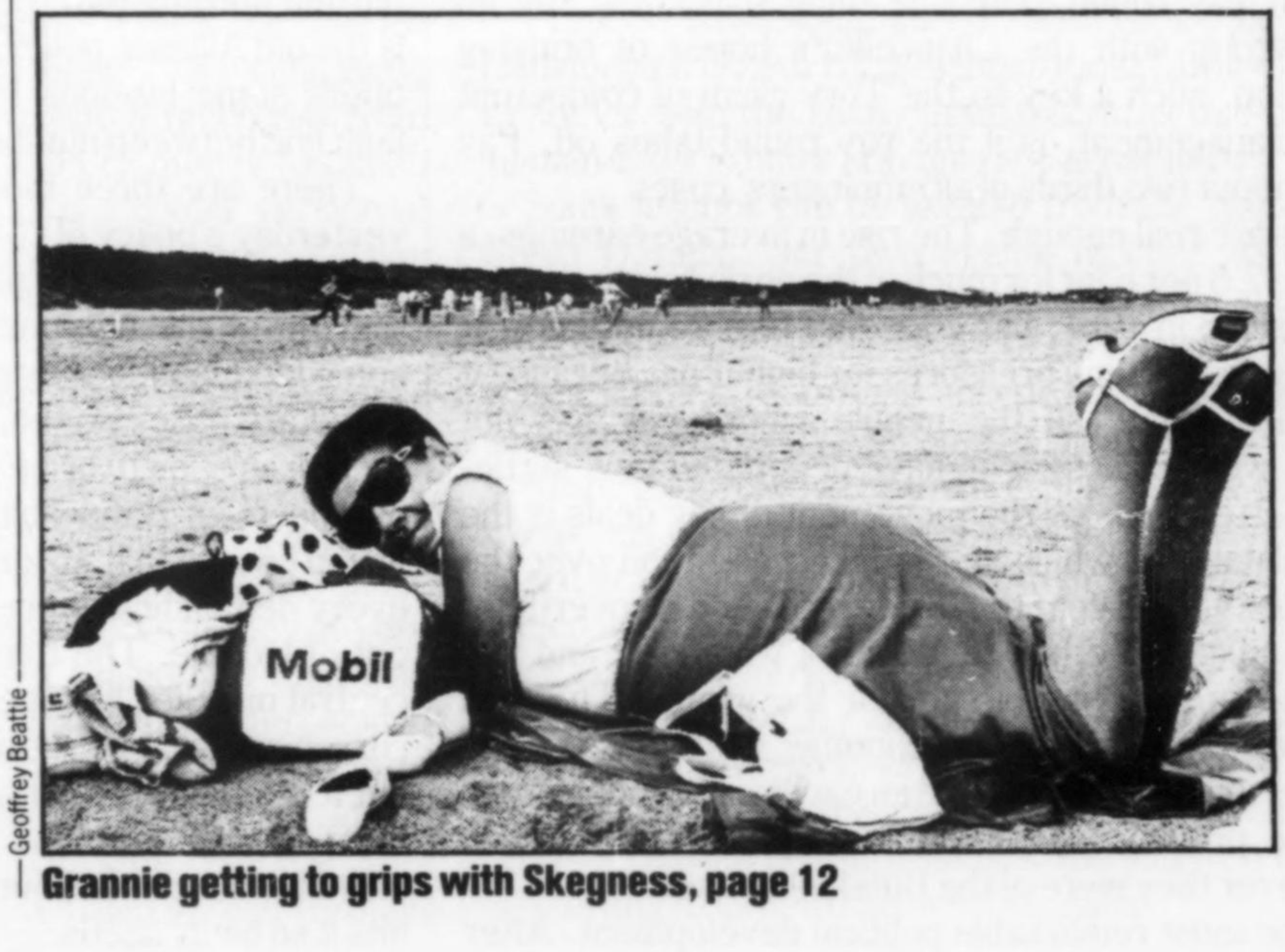

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What do we hang on our walls? Colin Painter looks at "good" and "bad" taste; The bikini is definitely out. Charlotte du Cann reports on our response; Suzanne Moore on advertising as insider trading between our dreams and ourselves; Cynthia Rose interviews Daniel Day Lewis about his latest challenge as paralysed writer Christy Brown; Postmodern plus pop equals successful marketing, says Andrew Goodwin

Britain, according to OPCS. Three-quarters—or 4.3 million—rely on state benefits as their main source of income at an average of just £65 a week. Less than a third of disabled adults are in paid work; and the earnings of those who are in work are substantially lower than those of non-disabled employees. More than 70 per cent of disabled adults were on incomes three-quarters or less of average income, after estimated extra spending on disability was taken into account. And 35 per cent were on incomes below half of average income.

The gap—or "income deficiency"—between disabled and non-disabled people was over £39 a week at 1988 prices, once the extra costs of disability are taken into account. Based on this figure, the total annual deficit in income for disabled adults, compared to non-disabled adults, was £7.8 billion. The Disability Alliance, part of the new Consortium, is pressing for a comprehensive disability income within the state system. The cost of such a scheme—at around £3 billion or £4 billion—pales into insignificance against the size of the need.

"Less than one-third of disabled adults are in paid work"

The scheme would consist of a disability pension and disability costs allowance. The pension would be a benefit replacement for earnings, designed for people of working age unable to work because of sickness or disability. It would take the place of existing benefits—invalidity benefit and severe disablement allowance (SDA)—which are meant to perform this function but grossly fail to do so. At present, the weekly basic rate of invalidity benefit is only £43.60, with SDA at just over £26.

Moreover, the new disability pension would eradicate the discrimination in the existing system, based as it is on national insurance contributions. Invalidity benefit is paid at a higher rate than SDA but someone can only get it if they have the right contributions record (as well as being incapable of work). If not, they may or may not get SDA (as it is littered with complicated qualifying conditions) and only then at the much lower rate of £26.20. The new disability pension would be based solely on incapacity for work. The other part of the Alliance's scheme would be an allowance towards the extra costs of disability, available to all disabled people and based on severity of disability. There would also be strong involvement of disabled people themselves in this assessment process.

The forthcoming review will be of crucial importance. The government could choose to bring in a series of measures in Social Security Bills, timed nicely with its next election strategy, involving a few hundred million expenditure for certain groups of people. This could give it the required PR result, but leave millions still in need. Or it could choose to make some fundamental reforms, to prevent poverty and promote independence.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward fell in love with records too

As we're into the Silly Season I might as well confess that, apart from cars, I fell in love with records. This enthusiasm too was one stage removed from the real thing. What I really studied was record catalogues. Where I lived there was one shop, Saville Pianos, that stocked the ordinary repertoire of 78rpm 10 inch and 12 inch standards. All quite pricey, and I had no inkling of those invaluable secondhand shops in London, the Gramophone Exchange and, later, Harridges in Moor Street.

Woolworths had its own sixpenny brands, first the 7 inch *Eclipse* and then the 8 inch *Crown*. Some of its artists, like Doris Arnold or Vera Lynn, later became famous and others used pseudonyms. But it also sold for sixpence odd discs from sets issued by the big companies. (In those days the average opera needed three volumes of six records each).

So to this day I retain an over-familiarity with disconnected slices of the Verdi and Puccini operas, or of the chamber music repertoire from great quartets like the Lener (on Columbia) or the Busch (on HMV). What I pored over were the catalogues of the major companies. In the 1930s there were (besides HMV and Columbia) Parlophone, Regal-Zonophone, and the new outsider Decca, with its access to incredible European discs, as well as the strange fruit of the imported Brunswick label. I didn't know, of course, that they were all trading markets between themselves.

Studying these lists, ticking off performances I chanced to hear on the radio or on other people's records, I gathered a haphazard folklore of musical chat. I now bore my family of musicians with the precise evening in Worcester when I heard the Beecham/Roy Henderson performance of Delius's *Sea Drift.* I can tell them of the discs where Britten plays the viola, or Elisabeth Schumann sings a single word for Lotte Lehmann, who had thoughtlessly wandered out of reach of the microphone.

Needless to say, I can recall the nice story of how when HMV's engineer played back to John McCormack his performance of a great Handel aria, the singer listened and exclaimed, "By God, it's impossible". The mere chance hearing on the radio of singers like Conchita Supervia or Tito Schipa brings me out in a rash of superlatives. The pre-war HMV catalogue also had a historical section, which simply accumulated spoken word records of famous people and a few musical performances which were too old or poorly made to be sold to unsuspecting punters. As I remember, it was full of election addresses by people like Lloyd George, Stanley Baldwin, Ramsay MacDonald or J R Clynes, or the likes of Grieg playing his own works through a fog of technical defects. (The record trade had a conspiracy of silence about the fact that every composer from Debussy to Gershwin made piano rolls that enable us to know precisely what they sounded like.)

But the HMV historical list was a doorway to the very idea that sounds could illuminate history. It included, for example, records of Tolstoy or Gandhi. Later we got used to the fact that the BBC Sound Archives can, through the magic of Edison's cylinders, let you hear Gladstone, Tennyson or Florence Nightingale.

The marketers of every new technique had a vested interest in making the last one obsolete. So after the cylinder phonograph, used in folk-collecting by Béla Bartók, came the disc, the blatnerphone wire, the film soundtrack. Finally, after the delayed introduction of long-playing records, came tape, which has changed everything. Not just any performance, but anyone's recollections have for many years been instantly recordable. There's an avalanche of oral history, an overwhelming treasury from the past. What gets recorded no longer depends on a handful of impresarios. Unknown inventors democratised sound.

But somebody, somewhere, has to catalogue it, a task too amorphous to be contemplated. The National Sound Archive has just completed the next best thing. It has produced a handy, if pricey, *Directory of Recorded Sound Resources in the United Kingdom* (British Library £30), researched by Jeremy Silver and edited by Lali Weerasinghe. This lists with every detail nearly 500 holdings of recorded sound, ranging from the National Sound Archive's own two million commercial and private items, and the BBC's two incomparable accumulations, down to your local reference library's cupboardful of tapes gathered in the 1970s.

They've attempted the impossible, since it's so difficult to define what a collection is. But I'm so pleased to see in it, not only the wonderful gatherings of oral history that tape has made possible, but the old-style hoardings of unreformed gramophone nutters. Mr Leo Anthony Harris (author of *I Hear You Calling Me*), is there with his irreplaceable records by John McCormack, and Mr Hughes of mid-Glamorgan, who has endlessly pressed the claims of the Peter Dawson Appreciation Society.

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England expects

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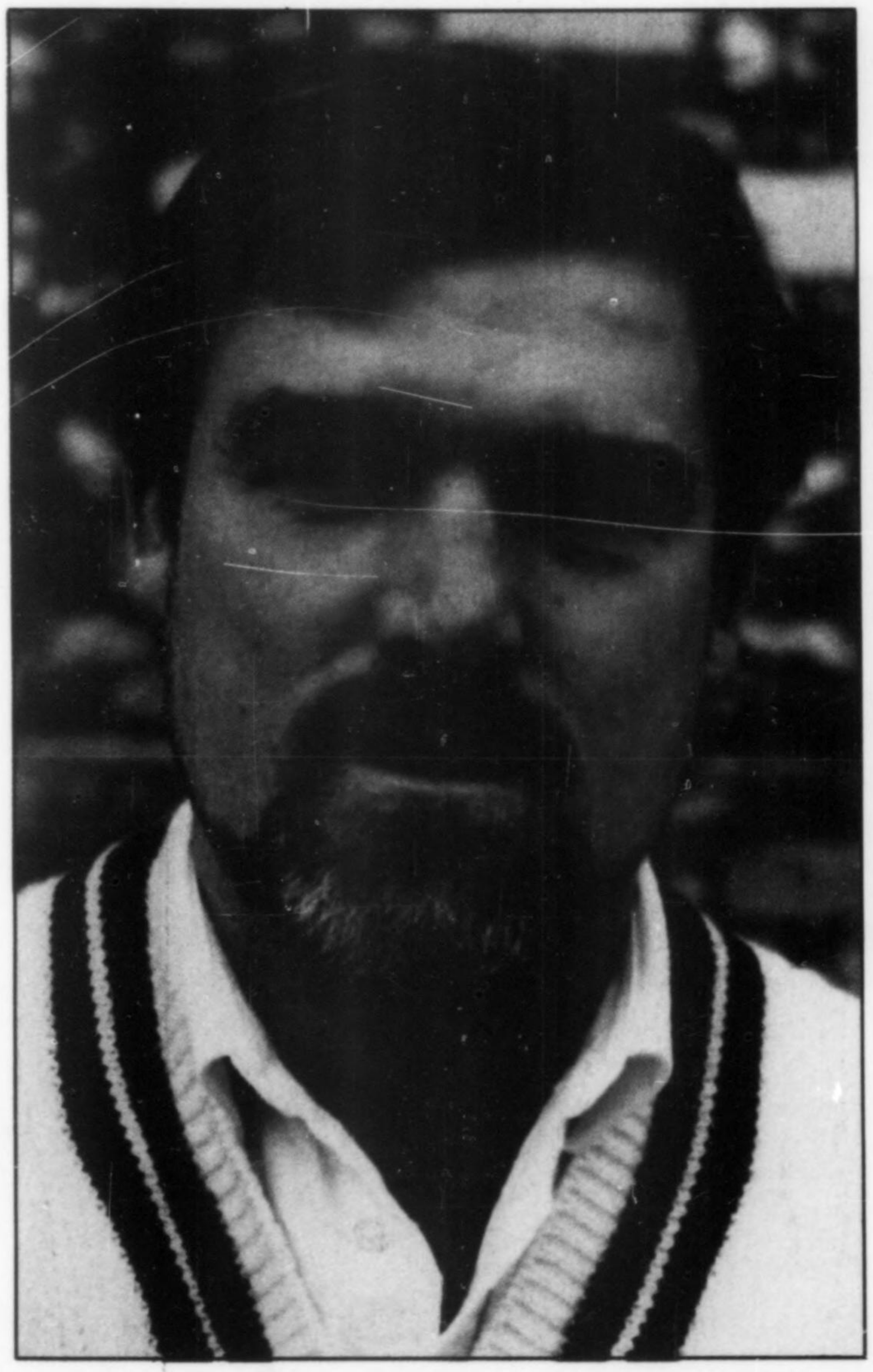
Yvonne Roberts follows up the case of Susan Poole

R W Johnson in Namibia

Plus: toxic waste; the limits of greenery; and images of a green world



The People's sporting heroes have let the people down. The Bulldog Breed has taken the money and renounced patriotism. Taking their place are the new English heroes —and they are black

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allows for 50 people to be tagged at each magistrates' court, but even if that number is achieved it will be too small a sample to do any very useful research. (If it is not achieved, there is a separate budget to continue the experiment for another six months.)

There is a widespread belief in the Home Office that Marconi (which won the Nottingham and North Tyneside contracts) and Chubb (which has the Tower Bridge contract) are making very little if any money on the deal, seeing it instead as a loss leader for a potentially lucrative future market. Judging by the American experience, the market could expand very rapidly. The number of people tagged has increased nearly tenfold in two years; more than 7,000 people are now on such schemes. In about 80 per cent of cases people sentenced to tagging contribute toward the costs of their sentence: between $3 and $10 a day.

Here, neither professionals nor public quite know what to make of the subject: mythologies have grown up and false claims have been made, both for and against tagging. Is it a soft option for criminals or an unacceptable form of state surveillance? The National Association of Probation Officers has two seemingly contradictory fears: that tagging will only be used against people who would have got bail anyway, (such as those who have committed, say, motoring offences); and that "young black defendants will ultimately be disproportionately represented on the schemes."

> *"Judging by the American experience, the market could expand very rapidly"*

The American experience, for what it's worth, is that all types of offenders get tagged. For example, 15 per cent of all tag-ees have been convicted of drug offences, and 4 per cent of sex offences. Judges and sheriffs have also used tagging for people who they think will be in danger in prison, such as child sex abusers and people with Aids. Tagging hasn't caused a significant reduction in the prison population, but that is partly because these are still early days.

According to Robert Thomas, vice president of Correction Services Inc. of Florida, which distributes Marconi's equipment in the US, "You not only have to help the offender through his house arrest programme—you have to get him over the problem that led to his crime." That means that courts sometimes put someone on probation with, say, an alcohol ban as a condition. The technology soon catches up: Mitsubishi and Guardian Interlock market a device that breathalyses the offender down the phone. Mitsubishi also have a system, now used in 24 schemes, that takes pictures of the offender at random intervals and transmits them down the line to the monitoring station.

Already, people here are looking at ways of extending tagging outside the criminal justice system. According to a recent report in *Nursing Times*, officials in Humberside are considering tagging confused elderly residents of nursing homes to prevent them straying.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward revels in his bus pass

The moment I got this certificate from the DSS I was down the lane to the bus stop, paying 75p for my trip to the nearest town and only 38p for the journey back. At the district council offices, despite the NALGO strike, I was instantly issued with my pensioner's bus pass, available not only on the Eastern Counties buses, but on those of half a dozen small private operators whose very names are a litany of the local history of country buses: Partridges, Beestons, Norfolks, Rule's and Chambers.

It's important to me, and much more important for many other people of my age, that while last week it cost me £3 to go the 12 miles to Ipswich and back it now costs half that. On Tuesdays and Fridays I can go 12 miles in the other direction, to Colchester, and back on Mr Rule's bus for a mere 80p.

I am, of course, subsidised by the county and district councils and I am naturally curious as to how the system works. Do the drivers of these very small firms tick on their journey-sheets the number of half fares taken, or does the county work on demographic assumptions?

Rural bus services present enormous problems for a society in which the decline of public transport obliges employed people of working age to be motorists whether they like it or not. Over the past 12 years I've watched a steady decline in the major services, coupled with huge price increases. Eastern Counties first cut our Sunday service altogether (imagine the effect of that for a family visiting its breadwinner and driver in hospital), and then it proposed to cut out the late night (ie, 9.45pm) bus. This brought a spirited protest from the then mayor of Hadleigh, Chris Culpin, on behalf of people attending evening classes in Ipswich. As a result the county council paid Eastern Counties to keep the service going.

The intolerable dilemma this creates in practice is illustrated by the fact that on odd occasions when I have used this service, I have found myself alone with the driver on a double-decker bus. But the county has not surrendered to the logic of the market. This service, and another two hours earlier, have been contracted to Norfolk and Sons of Nayland, a firm in operation as common carriers for 150 years.

Several solutions have been tried. One is the community minibus with volunteer drivers. This was encouraged by the Transport Acts of 1980 and 1985, and the Rural Transport Development Fund. Now it is under threat from the proposed European Commission "second test" for minibus drivers, and the 100 per cent Vehicle Excise Duty increase for minibus owners in this year's budget. A second solution is the shared taxi system taken for granted in third world countries. A third solution comes from the sensible Swiss. Just as in the last century they developed a Democratic Railway Movement, so in this one they have a Post-Bus system. Swiss rural buses meander through the villages but they do provide personal mobility in the most remote areas. The Swiss take it for granted that passengers should be subsidised by the profit on the post.

My bus pass is my second transport liberation. The first was five years ago when British Rail, ahead of any other national institution, abolished sex discrimination by issuing Senior Citizen's Rail Cards at 60 to both sexes. That November BR had an incredible go-anywhere-and-back for £2 offer for the oldies.

The results were electric. We filled every train, bringing our flasks and sandwiches and gossiping about the best route from Bristol to Inverness. It was a one-off bonanza, of course. Not only have later special offers been less attractive, but a whole series of restrictions on discounted fares has ensured that the most popular journeys and times are out of reach. For BR has been instructed by the government to fill those trains with full-fare passengers.

But remember that bold transport experiment, the late GLC's Fares Fair policy, ruled illegal by the High Court. Had it continued, accompanied by a concomitant programme of capital investment, London would have escaped its current road traffic crisis.

Go to most cities in France, Germany or Italy, and plenty of rural places too, and you find vast programmes of investment in trains, trams and buses. Sterile argument about whether ownership itself should be public or private are absent, since a policy of supporting cheap, frequent and reliable public transport pays huge social dividends.

Every marginal motorist lured on to public transport and every load of freight lured back on to the railway is a small reduction in the incredible cost of road-building and maintenance, in accidents, in misery and suffering. Every attempt to provide personal mobility to the old, the young, the housebound and the poor is a gesture towards social justice.

This is why, in issuing me with a bus pass, my county and district councils are striking a blow for civilisation.

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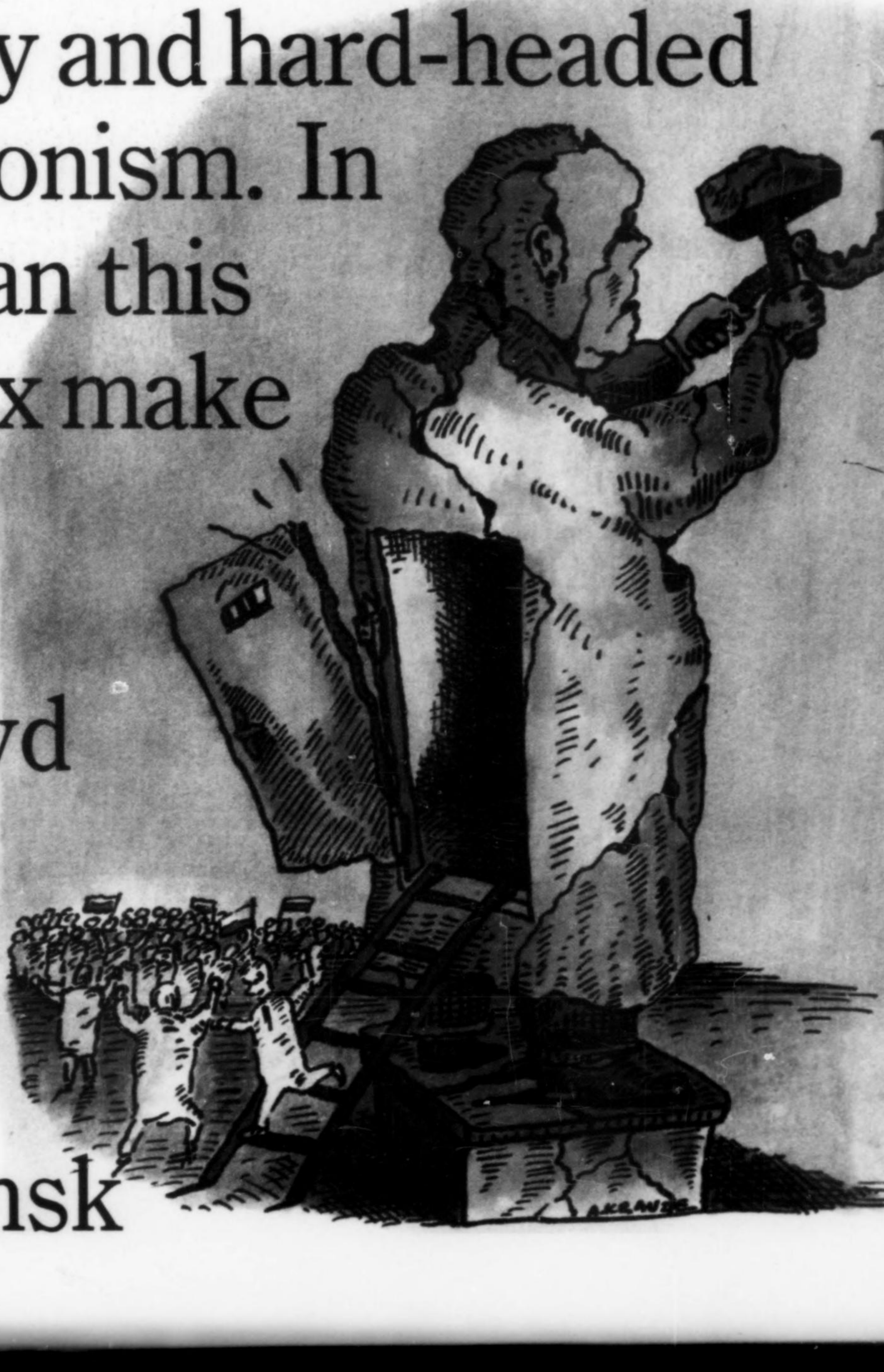
Brink of Democracy

In opposition Solidarity combined mystic patriotism, religiosity and hard-headed trade unionism. In power, can this heady mix make anything work? John Lloyd reports from Warsaw and Gdansk



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"frontline", All Saints' Road—has come to epitomise tensions between police and community.

Almost as alarming as the recent "not guilty" verdict are documents which defence barrister Michael Mansfield was prevented from using in court. In them a senior police officer is cited telling members of a local housing trust that: "The Mangrove has been in receipt of large sums of public money... [which have] been salted away in personal accounts and into property in the Caribbean." The high-ranking officer goes on to imply that the Mangrove was using a proposed project with the Abbeyfield Society for sheltered accommodation in the area in order to "salt away further public funds".

In another document, apparently written by a Home Office official, the same officer is reported to have said that the Mangrove's "criminal activities had frustrated the growth of the black community". The official states that the police officer in question "does not listen nor want to hear anything which does not accord with his own diagnosis". Supported by the National Black Caucus, a network of black voluntary organisations, Crichlow is pushing for a full inquiry into policing in Notting Hill. "What happened to me", he insists, "happens to black people every day. They are being planted, going to court and losing. I was lucky."

Many black youngsters in Notting Hill harbour enormous resentment towards the police, whose drug-busting operations have been heavy-handed and unpopular. So sound organisation of the Carnival is vital, to avoid potential flashpoints. Yet this year's arrangements have been dogged by in-fighting.

Amid police investigations and a refusal by funding bodies to release any money for Carnival '89, the event's administrators, the Carnival and Arts Committee (CAC) was liquidated at an emergency meeting. A local barrister, Claire Holder, emerged to head a new body, the Carnival Enterprise Committee (CEC). Although backed by funding bodies—and local Conservative MP Dudley Fishburn—only a third of the money usually earmarked for Carnival has been released to CEC. Many potential sponsors have been scared away by negative publicity. And CEC has been left to organise the event in half the usual time.

Some—Frank Crichlow among them—claim that the confusion is the culmination of a conspiracy between the police, the authorities and local developers all eager to gentrify Notting Hill at the expense of the black residents.

Former CAC chairman, Alex Pascall, laments: "We must concentrate on the fact that we have allowed the authorities to come in and split us all up. The rows should have been kept within the family—not allowed to divide us up."

Yet most people in the area display little interest in the implications of the Frank Crichlow trial or the factionalism within the Carnival management. To them, Carnival is about forgetting these kind of everyday concerns and shedding all inhibition once a year. As the gold-toothed resident told me: "More and more there is politics in Carnival. People don't care about politics, they just want to go free-up themselves. That's what Carnival is for—not politics, not money—for pleasure."

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward goes to Cornwall and finds a little gem among the rubble of the tourist trade

My late mother-in-law was one of those incomers whom we have all learned to deride in Cornwall. Only it *was* back in 1921, and she did become a local public figure, not to say landmark. And she *was* given an illuminated address by the Penzance Trades Council for her services to the General Strike Committee in 1926.

All the same, whenever I go there I am irredeemably a tourist, doing the rounds of tin mines and craft shops suffering from Heritage Fatigue. The local intelligentsia calls us "emmets" or "grockels". Hungrily eyeing the bookshelves of the souvenir shops I found, among the Poldark novels and the works of Daphne du Maurier, a book which throws light on the intolerable dilemmas faced by Cornwall, and of course, other peripheral communities in Wales or the Scottish Isles.

This is *Cornwall at the Crossroads* by Bernard Deacon, Andrew George and Ronald Perry, published last year by the Cornish Social and Economic Research Group (£4.25 from COSERG, 51 Plain-an-Gwarry, Redruth, Cornwall). It is a nicely ironical document full of quotations from literature as well as from policy statements to illustrate our assumptions about the county: "Cornwall is remote (and sometimes mysterious). It possesses a timelessness (or backwardness). It is too small to be taken seriously. It's a leisure playground."

These assumptions led to strategies for population growth based on industrial development. But the bottom dropped out of the employment prospects. Migration in to Cornwall was still encouraged, while the top end of the job market, with better local jobs, higher pay and promotion, steadily moved up-country. For example, the headquarters of the police, the water boards and the regional offices of public bodies moved out of Cornwall to Devon or to "the South-West" in general. Old staple industries—agriculture, fishing, tin-mining, china-clay working and manufactures—have a declining workforce. Tourist figures are actually falling so "the planners are currently backing new brands of tourism—activity, heritage, culture—to replace the bucket and spade brigade". Of course, as tourism faltered, the "retirement industry" has been expected to become the new boom sector.

Actual jobs tend to be low-paid, casual, seasonal, held by the transient incoming population; or all four at once. One answer was road-building, an effort to eliminate the distances and the differences between Cornwall and everywhere else. Another has been the property boom, ensuring that the young and low-paid cannot possibly live in the places they grew up in. It's an all too familiar story.

The authors reject the idea that links with Devon are the answer, since Cornwall would stay a poor relation. They look to the lessons provided by the Highlands and Islands Development Board and the Development Board for rural Wales, but most particularly to the experience of Finistère in Britanny.

They see the effect both of market forces and public policy in Cornwall as the making of an Alice-through-the-looking-glass world. There, "*more housing* results in more second homes, more long-distance retirees and more new settlers, and seemingly fewer houses available for locals; *more factories* bring executives and workers to Cornwall, and result in less control by the locals over their own destiny; *creating jobs* means inviting in-migrants to occupy our top jobs; and *more roads* to solve traffic congestion are clogged up with more cars, resulting in continuing traffic problems and a never-ending demand for even more roads."

They explore these ironies in the free market in housing, where of course the non-owner occupier can't move anywhere, and the free labour market in which Cornish unemployment remains nearly twice the UK average. Cornish male earnings still lag 20 per cent below UK levels. And they discuss the questionable advantages of the pursuit of growth.

Finally they turn to alternatives, the most significant of which is making Falmouth play the same role for Cornwall that Brest has for Finistère: "South-east England is remote from Cornwall, so build maritime links to neighbouring places and use sea routes to more distant countries and open direct links with Europe." They believe that much would follow: developments in higher education and a reversal of the brain drain, with a whole series of measures such as a Cornish Development Agency, a two-tier housing market, and a series of modifications of market forces.

It's a brave attempt to treat real issues seriously, and I'm so pleased to have found it among the pixies, gemstones and ceramic models of dead tin mines.

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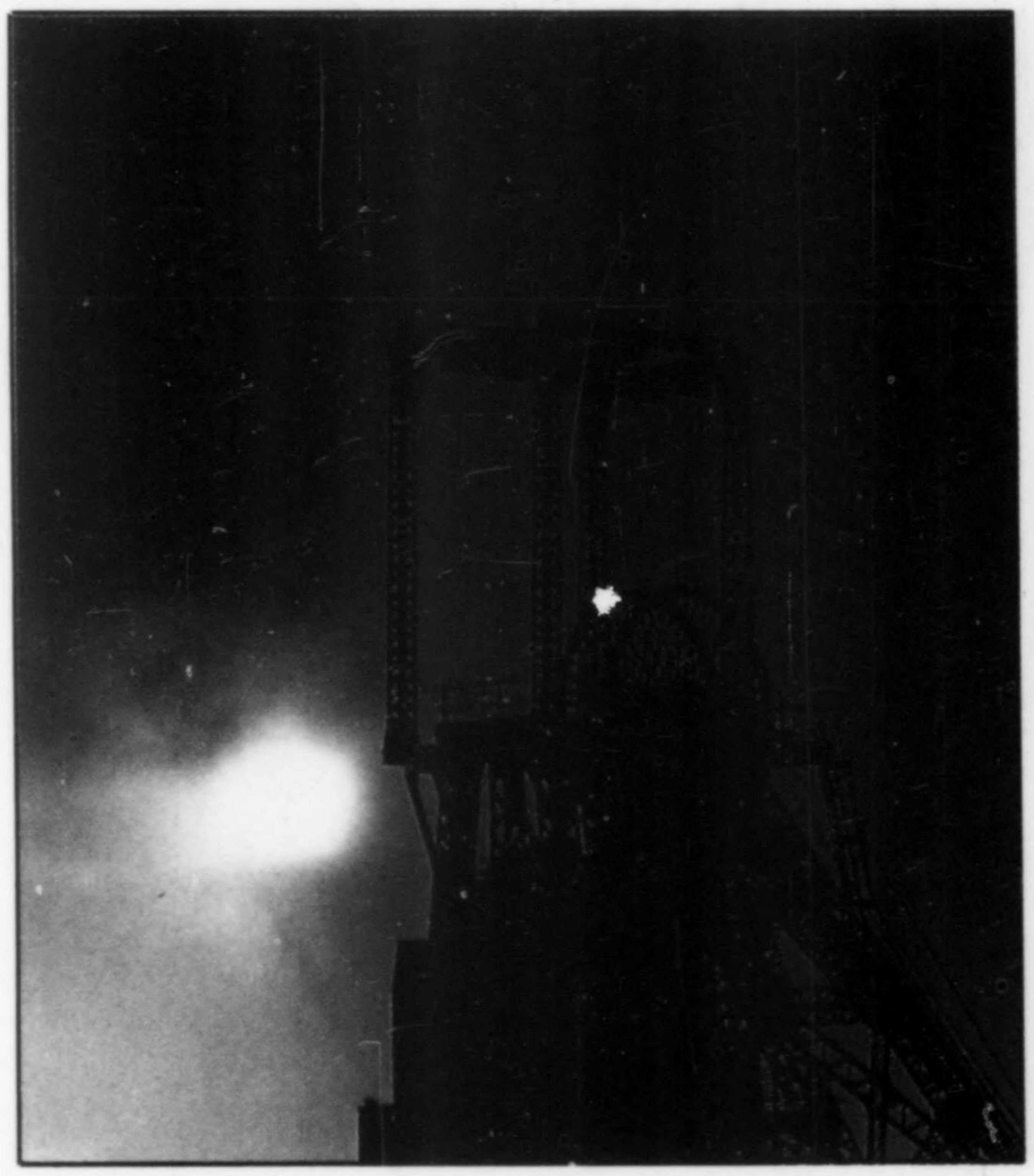
Museum Economy



The pits are closing down in South Wales. Peter Walker points to new investment and predicts prosperity in the valleys. But can a post-coal economy mean more than garden festivals, mining museums and heritage parks?

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Angela Carter on the Curse of the Mummy

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AND ITS BRITISH

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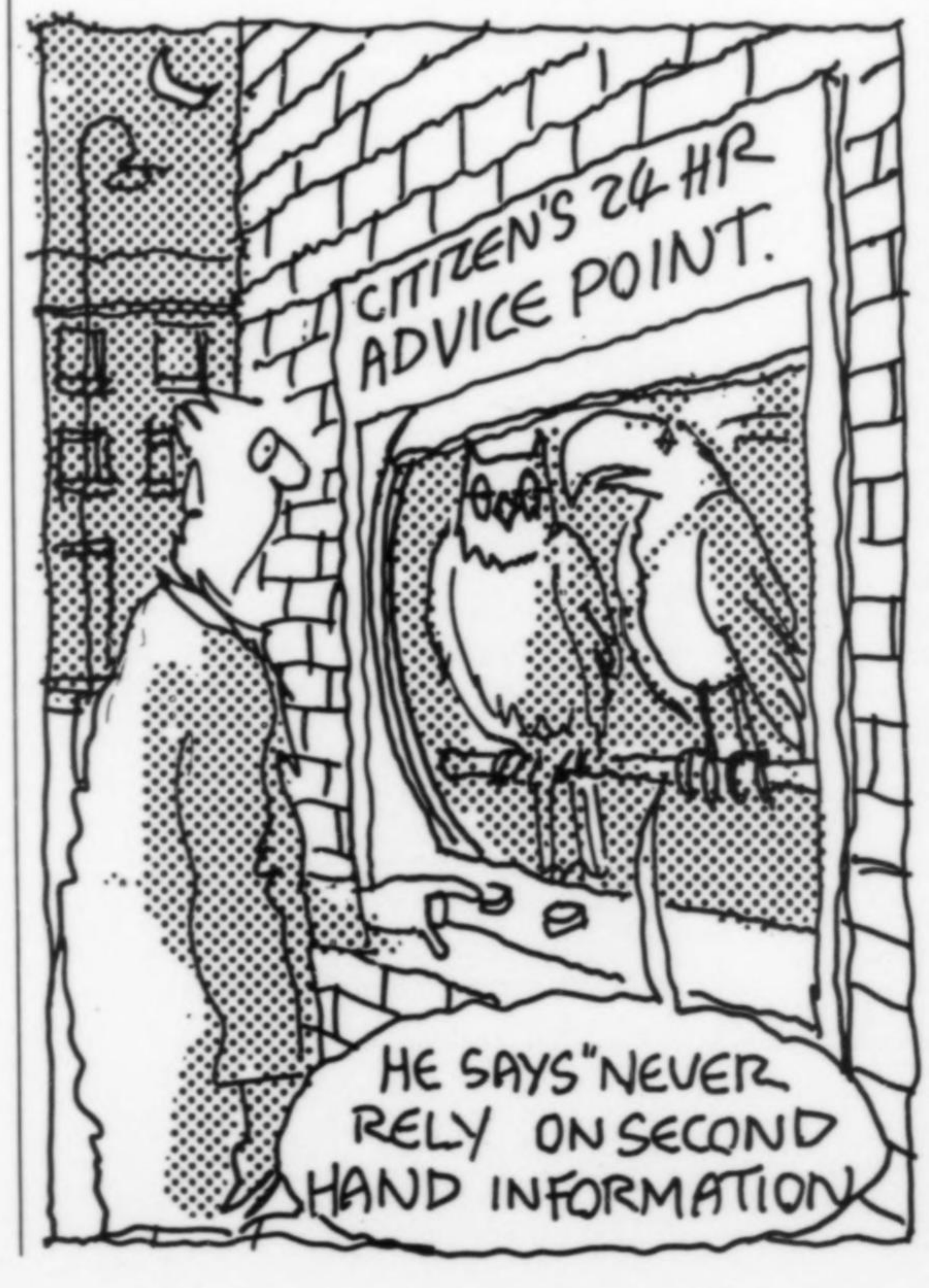
public. More and more, suggests the study, this means getting involved in complex negotiations or representing clients at benefit tribunals. So ever greater demands face the volunteer.

The reality is somewhat different. Another piece of research found that volunteers mainly do simple information work. They don't often get involved in complex cases. When they do, it's because they are heavily supported by paid workers: bureau managers and specialist staff such as welfare rights workers.

One bureau manager found that on his arrival some of the long-serving volunteers left because they weren't prepared to achieve the standards he expected of them. His experience is that young unemployed graduates are the most worthwhile group of volunteers. Though they quickly move on to paid employment, they give a lot of time when unemployed and so become "professional" advice workers more quickly. For this manager the difficulty is not the high turnover of volunteers; it is the short supply of potentially able ones. "The sort we want get paid jobs."

At issue here is the future of volunteer advice workers, given the costs associated with them. Developing an effective recruitment and selection programme takes up management time. Volunteers also need considerable paid-worker support if they are to attempt to give a professional service. And any paid volunteer who can meet the standards NACAB requires is inevitably going to wonder why he or she shouldn't get paid for the job. At some point the organisation has to ask itself whether it would be more sensible to have a mainly paid workforce. NACAB does not discuss this option openly at present. But as the service has developed, paid workers have been seen as essential to provide head office services. Increasingly, full-time salaried bureau managers are the norm. Despite funding problems, the logic of having paid advice workers is powerful. When NACAB has its centenary celebrations, volunteer advice workers may well be a thing of the past.


CITIZEN'S 24 HR ADVICE POINT.
HE SAYS "NEVER RELY ON SECOND HAND INFORMATION

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward pushes out his wheelie bin and worries that it caters for his trash habit

Most childhood recollections include the drama of the weekly arrival of the dustmen, humping out the bins with noise and clatter. Current Conservative think-tankers are haunted by the spectre of refuse collectors knocking off at midday and making vast sums by sorting saleable rubbish.

There is no shortage of people anxious to join the refuse team, even though it takes its toll in back troubles because of endlessly heaving heavy loads around. Anyone in the business tells you of the incredible things that householders throw away. Fifteen years ago the London Borough of Lambeth provoked the Totters' Strike by claiming that the material salvaged by the dustmen from the weekly round was in fact stolen from the council.

This was an incredibly shortsighted attitude since the whole problem of waste recovery and the reduction of the terrifying bulk of dumped material is that of making it worth somebody's while to recycle the stuff. In the US, the ultimate throwaway culture, I've stayed in places where it is compulsory for householders to separate metals, paper and glass, and where it is seen as automatic that organic matter should be composted. It is clearly *not* impossible to impose this burden on the disposers of domestic rubbish.

Here in sleepy Suffolk, councils, residents and the local press have been taking sides in the past two years on the issue of introducing wheelie bins. These are wheeled bins with hinged lids in heavy-duty plastic, two-and-a-half times the size of the ordinary kind. They are loaded into specially adapted vehicles with no lifting and carrying.

I've listened to endless debate about it. Some thought, slanderously, that our environment services officer must have been seduced by the makers at some annual sanitary conference. One councillor told me that it was all a ploy to ensure that when current legislation obliges refuse collection to be put out to open tender, only the councils could win. Others complained about the appearance of the Daleks in the narrow streets of ancient local towns.

Brian Allt, a Jeremiah from Sudbury, raises an ominous question, "Just wait until they have been in general use for a year or two. What are the collectors supposed to do when the wheels come off? Will the contract with the supplier make him liable for running repairs, or for injuries to collectors or householders who have had to try and lift them?" And the council, which expected the wheelies to cost £20 for each household, actually had to pay £24.95. One councillor argued that the bin manufacturers were operating a cartel. On the other hand it was claimed that in a town like Ipswich the change will save £100,000 a year.

In an effort to popularise their introduction the council lent bins to the villagers of Kersey last August Bank Holiday to organise the first National Open Invitation Wheelie Bin Race, a test of skill over a variety of terrain including a water-splash. Old ladies can be issued with mini-wheelies if they prefer, and the council tells us that if our bins aren't full we can top up with garden refuse.

Personally, I find it a great convenience. I don't have to renew our dustbins, it is easier for me to wheel our rubbish out to the gate, and it is certainly better for our amiable dustmen not to have to acquire those chronic and painful backbone problems that seem to be an inevitable occupational disease. I'm a beneficiary and in fact I see it almost as a challenge to throw away as much as possible each week.

But I'm being lured still further into the waste disposal mountain. Most of my junk is paper and the industry either demands or rejects our old papers following instant changes in the market. Every so often the youth club in our nearest town has a drive to collect massive amounts of paper only to find that when they've filled a vast container these fluctuations mean that the trade doesn't want to buy it. We've got into the habit of taking all the bottles to the heavily used bottle bank in the same town.

How much easier to pitch everything into our vast wheelie bin and forget about it. I wish we had a tradition of openness in local government. Our chief environmental services officer is a nice, conscientious public servant. I would like him to publish figures about the increase in the sheer bulk of rubbish he must dispose of as a result of the change. Because, whatever its benefits and whatever the savings or additional spending that the wheelies have brought, it would have been more in keeping with the facts of the 20th century to persuade us consumers to deal separately with the different kinds of rubbish we generate.

I love my wheelie bin, but I don't trust it. It caters for my irresponsibility.

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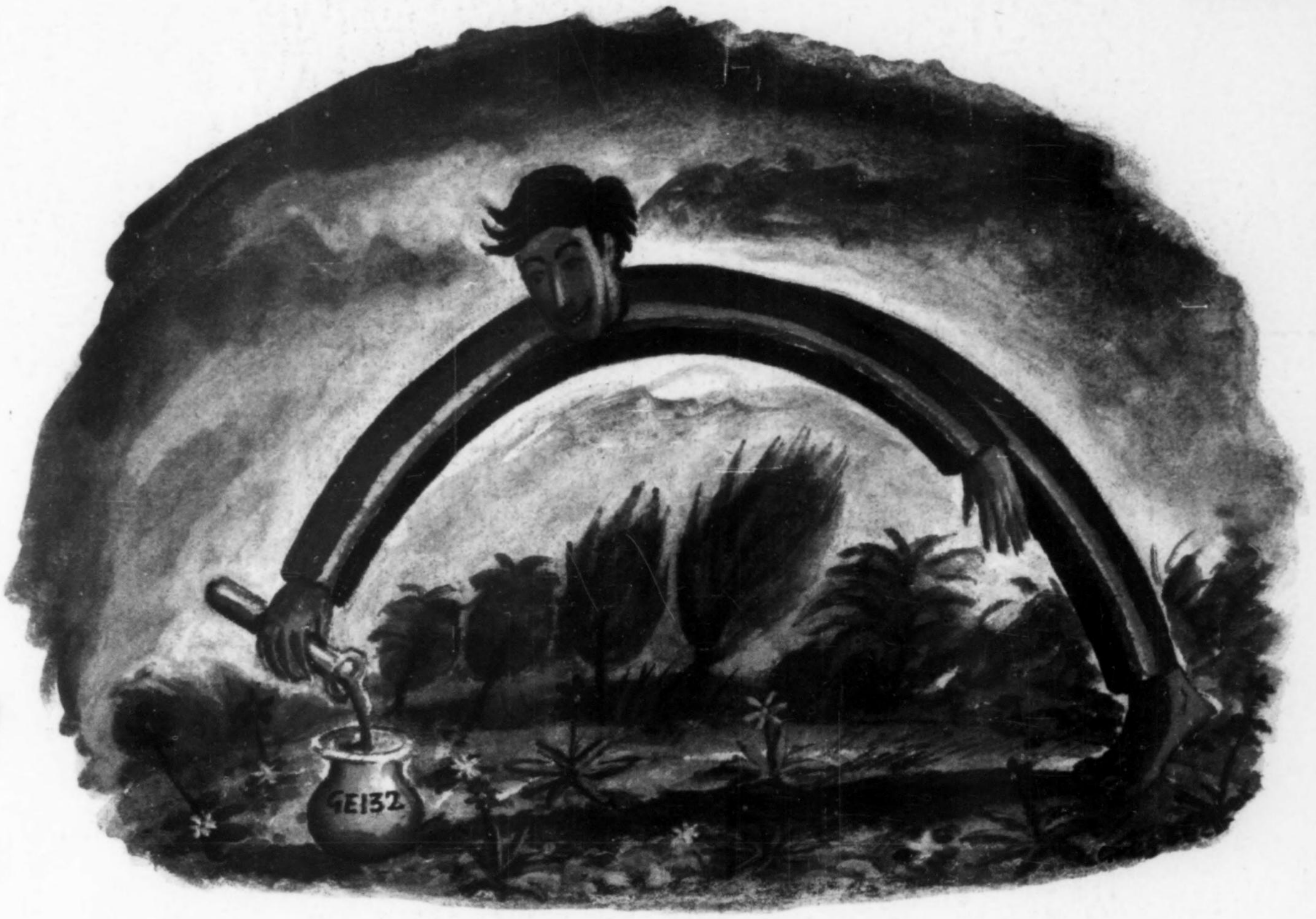

Pretty poison

Nature is good for us. Its name also nets fat profits for the health industry, whose organic products may have nothing natural about them. Duncan Campbell and Nigel Townson report on a cure that poisons

Lynne Segal on the beast in man; Edward Pearce on Peregrine Worsthorne

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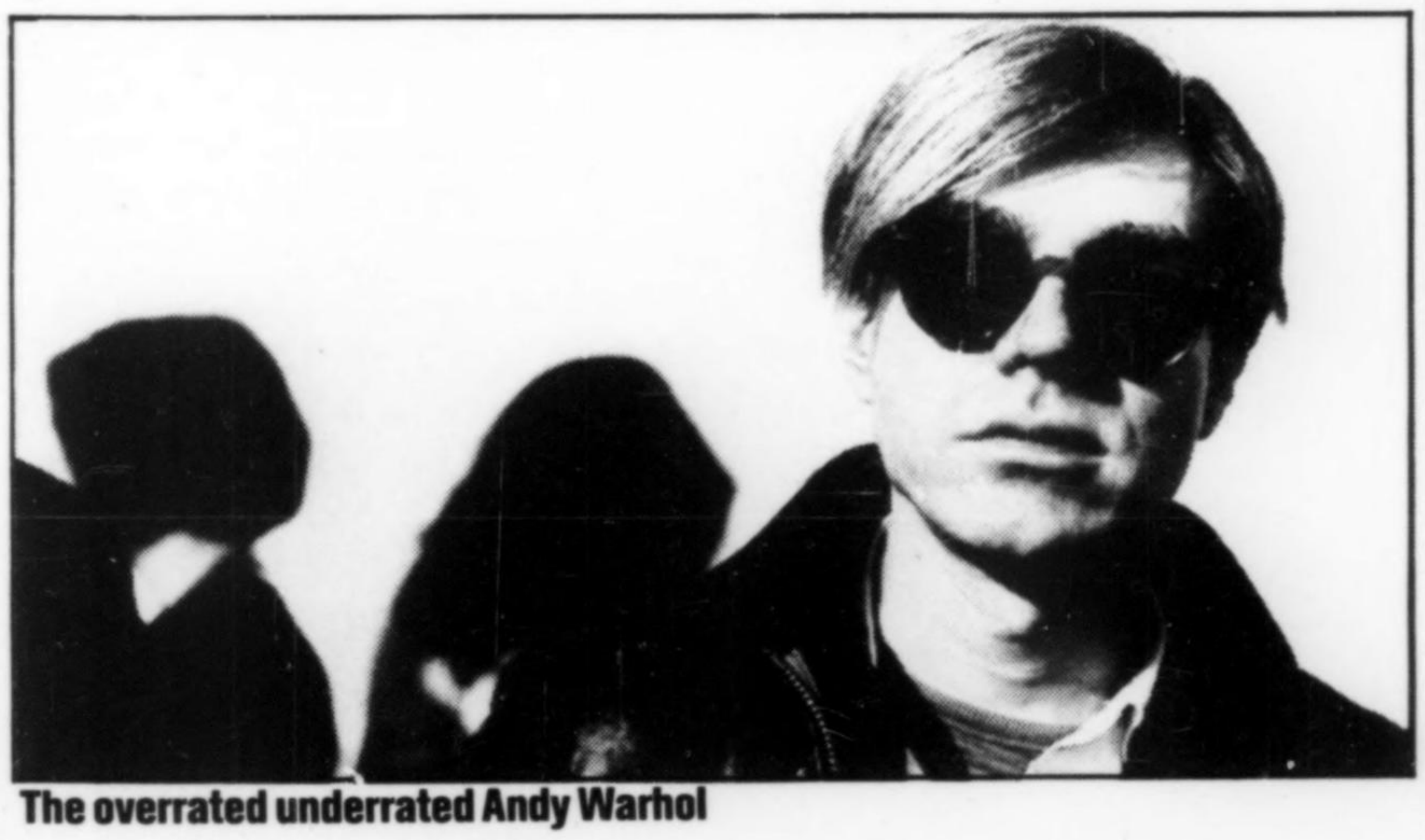
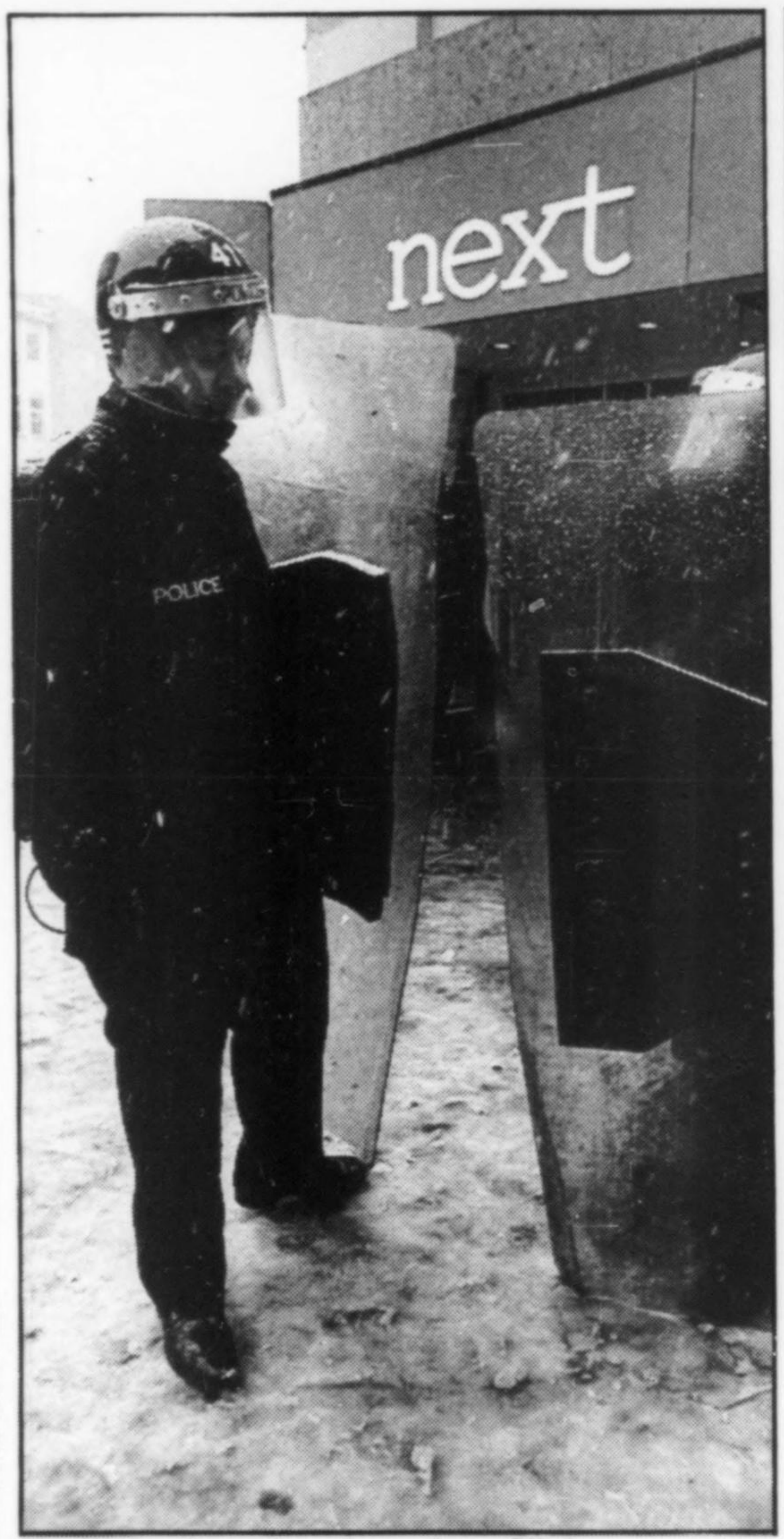


The overrated underrated Andy Warhol



Andrew Moore/Reflex

The Wolverhampton shop where Clinton McCurbin died

custody, but that the causes of death are often controversial.

Officers' assumptions about black violence will influence their treatment of suspects. One recently told me: "I would almost automatically use greater force when restraining a black man. They are more violent, even the women." A different police strategy goes into operation in black areas. This "public order" approach can mean a terrifying street presence, with Notting Hill top of the cops for now. Often these involve faceless squads such as the District Special Unit. Even Paul Mathias at Holloway station believes that his area is "stable" and can enjoy "normal policing", because there are fewer blacks there than elsewhere.

Paul Gordon of the Runnymede Trust suggests that black fears would be allayed by an independent local panel with rights to inspect police stations and carry out investigations. The national Black Caucus will be calling for this measure at a conference this month.

Meanwhile, blacks' daily exposure to police racism means that official accounts of suspicious deaths feed existing distrust. In his book on the police, *Talking Blues*, Roger Graef quotes Rose, 80 and almost blind, who lives alone in Notting Hill and is desperately vulnerable. She, who once loved the British Bobby, is today full of bitterness: "One of them tried to help me when my bag fell down," she says. "I spat at him and told him to be off. They wish blacks was dead anyway."

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward argues with Harry the sweep — who blames everything on Arther Scargill

I used to use our drain rods and the right kind of brush to sweep our chimneys. But the chimney sweep from one of the local towns has better equipment and does it in half the time. I'm happy to join his queue. He gets more work than he can take up, as the agonies of VAT returns make it sensible for him to keep his one-man business below that tax threshold.

I like to question him about the economics of self-employment. But he always likes to lecture me on the economics of the coal industry. As the disposer of some of its waste products he has, of course, every reason to be interested. He has a round of smallholders waiting for his bags of soot.

For several years past I have been arguing with him about the miners' strike. He takes the view that Arthur Scargill led his forces, without bothering to take a vote, into a trap carefully prepared for him by the then NCB and the government. I always oppose him, even though I held this view at the time with the result that all my friends called me a Thatcherite pig.

The reason why I argue with Harry is that his own evidence shows that the subsequent closures would have happened regardless of the actions of the miners. Not only the NCB but every other dealer in solid fuel already had a growing trade in coal from all over the world. It came either from countries where labour was cheap, or where a government subsidy encouraged exports.

During the strike these imports increased dramatically at a variety of east coast ports, including little places like Wivenhoe. There, Essex University students, when not demonstrating on behalf of the NUM, could push a barrow through the street and pick up their winter fuel supply which quite genuinely fell off the backs or over the sides of the lorries that roared through the town.

Their barrow-loads would consist of coal not only from West Germany and Poland, but also from South Africa, and even high-quality anthracite from the People's Republic of China, which was sold to merchants—according to Harry—at prices 40 per cent lower than the trade price of the Welsh variety. The ordinary consumers are never told where their fuel comes from, and imports, while not as frenetic as they were during the strike, have stayed well above the pre-strike level.

Harry's experienced eye can tell what kind of fuel the customer uses. He correctly identified the allegedly smokeless reconstructed briquettes we buy, just from the residue. They are inevitably imported, and for once Harry blamed this not on the miners but on the former NCB. He claims that because of our failure to invest in plant, British coal dust was exported to West Germany for processing and reimported here at more than seven times the price.

When he came for his annual visit a fortnight ago, I'd actually hoped that we could explore the whole business of being self-employed and solvent. But once we had discussed the kinds of really flavoursome tomatoes that he and my neighbours grow, too good for the trade to offer the ordinary consumer, we were back on the subject of coal.

I wanted to stay off it, just to avoid an argument, but it was the day after British Coal had announced the closure of the last Kentish colliery, giving as the reason that too few men turned up on the previous Saturday to make weekend working possible. Harry, of course, blamed this on Arthur Scargill. I claimed that it was simply an excuse for closures intended anyway, and I managed to divert him into telling me that the Kentish seams were only discovered by accident in borings long ago for an earlier version of the Channel Tunnel.

This led us to the safe ground of geological faults and anomalies, and to the colliery at Brora in north-east Scotland. This was a drift mine exploiting a fault on the Duke of Sutherland's ground. It was one of those pits not thought worth keeping when coal was nationalised, and the miners formed a co-op to buy it through weekly deductions from their pay. All went well and small local industries, like clay flowerpot-making, took advantage of the cheap local fuel. Then in the early 1970s, North Sea oil brought the building of the oil rig at nearby Nigg. The pit closed, and the clay-firing works closed, as the miners went off to new jobs at three times the earnings on the rig. Once the structure was built, they lost them.

"There you are," said Harry, "everyone's too greedy." So I asked how he, as a family man, made out on his chimney-sweeping earnings. "Well," he replied, "my wife has this little job, and I have this office-cleaning contract in the evenings."

Since I'd learned that he was also a keen gardener, I asked if he ever had any time just to relax. "If you want your own freedom," he said, "there's always a price to pay."

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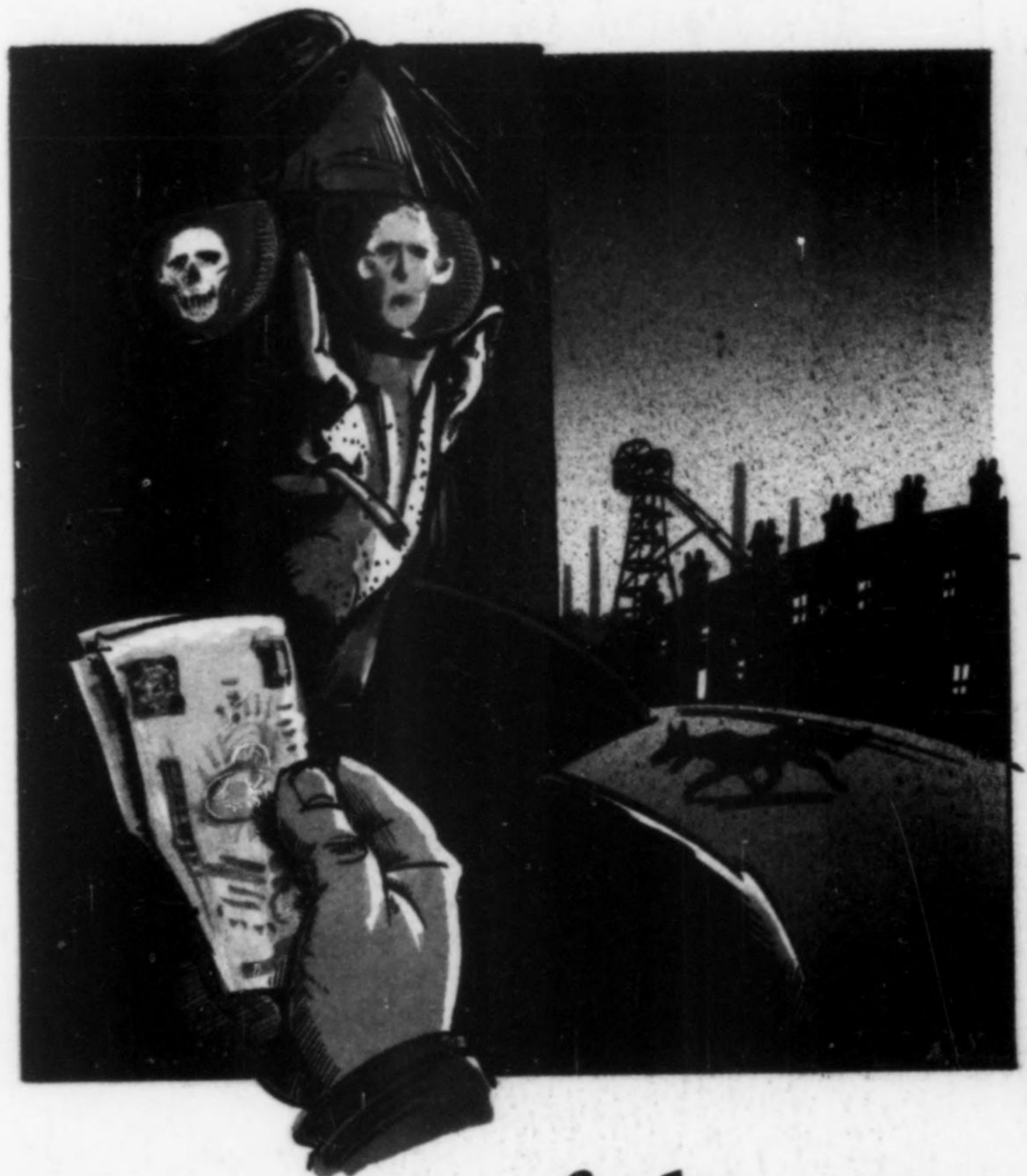
The street connection



In the rage against the drug barons, the small dealers who trade hard drugs on the streets of the unemployed get ignored—not least by the police. But control them and you control the drug problem

John Pilger remembers the forgotten Australians

Making the Greater Germany

Alice Walker on the making of her new novel

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system is arbitrary: "I don't know on what basis decisions are made. I feel that there should be guidelines so that there are some objective criteria by which you know you are being judged. I am single and over 50 and I don't know how far this counts against me. If I knew I had no chance I would not go through the whole procedure as it can be very painful."

Her attempts to adopt have been hampered by staff shortages, which stopped the adoption department in her local authority operating for a while. Her social worker is a generic (non-specialist) worker with an overwhelming caseload; when she went on maternity leave Dorothy was left with no support for about six months. Like Mary she shares a concern that all the social workers she spoke to were white: "In one incident it became apparent that I knew more about a cultural aspect of a child's background than the social worker did."

Workers in Westminster social services also feel that press coverage of same-race placements has been damaging. "The case of the 17-month baby was more about fostering than race," reiterates Chris Hussle, assistant divisional director for adoption and fostering. "A part of a foster parent's job is to make the child's transition to a new family easy."

In the year 1988-89, Westminster council made no trans-racial placements. Out of the 11 children placed who were black, seven were of mixed parentage and were placed in families of precise racial matchings. Alan Simpson, district director of social services, is keen to stress that Westminster is "just a middle-of-the-road Conservative authority tackling the issue in the same way as any other local authority. Like everyone else we still have a lot to learn."

Much has changed over the last ten years. "We learned that you couldn't approach ethnic minorities with the same bureaucratic machinery that had been used for white families. We had to challenge our own assumptions about black culture," says Simpson. The authority has made a concerted effort to recruit workers from the many ethnic minority groups in Westminster and to get a good racial mix on their adoption panel: "It would be nice to have black judges as well."

Waltham Forest social services has a similarly successful policy. They now have a surplus of Asian families on their books who are willing to foster and adopt, and act as a resource for other boroughs. "We found that once we had appointed Asian workers and worked together to approach the Asian community, then word of mouth took over," says Charles Waddicor, assistant director of social services.

The social workers and black people to whom I spoke were not worried about whether same-race placements were preferable—they clearly are when well-resourced—but about the fact that there are so many black children in care. They all want to know why. Last year the organisation Black and In Care had its grant cut. The Commission for Racial Equality was unable to get funding for research into this area. Health minister David Mellor would do better giving the £150,000 he has put into studying trans-racial adoption into research on why black children are in care in the first place.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward plays parlour games while the nation is smothered by its own heritage

Those innocent parlour games of categorising people, that we all play, usually arise by accident. We divide people into Martha and Mary types, regardless of the biblical implications of the story. Isaiah Berlin alleges that he found in some obscure classical author, the line "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." He went on to classify some of the great names of history as one or the other of these woodland creatures, but got stuck when he reached Tolstoy.

Berlin devoted a brilliant little book to his hypothesis that Tolstoy was by nature a fox, but believed in being a hedgehog. Colin MacInnes devised a similar game in the columns of *New Society*. He divided us into Jews (moralising, prophetic, radical-traditional), Greeks (life-loving, crafty, hedonistic-spiritual), and Romans (authoritarian, organisational, grandiose, rhetorical).

He too plotted well-known names on this psychological triangle, finding, for example, Harold Macmillan to be a diluted Roman posing as a Greek, and Evelyn Waugh, a Greek who wished he was a Roman. Similarly, he found De Gaulle to be a Jew who had read a lot of Roman literature. And he concluded, "So what, dear reader, are you and your friends?"

My contribution to the parlour games repertoire was more prosaic than theirs. Trying to find a way of categorising children's responses to their environments, I concluded that they could be divided between the *antiquarians*, who cherish an environment precisely because of its associations with continuity and familiarity, *explorers*, who positively enjoy and savour the change from one home to another in a different habitat, and *neophiliacs* for whom the surroundings inherited from the past have a smell of oppression and deprivation, while the new, just because it is new, promises hope and a more expansive life. And of course it applies to adults too, with the difference that the usual battering we get from life pushes us into different attitudes from those we start out with.

I used to say that I woke in the morning a neophiliac, spent the day as an explorer, and went to bed a weary antiquarian. It applies to many other aspects of life besides the environment.

What brought the whole theme back into my mind was the series of TV programmes made by Patrick Nuttgens, *The Home Front*. He introduced bits of old film from the 40s, 50s and 60s, which revealed a nation of neophiliacs, glorying in the new world of housing, with modern architects as heroes. But when he went around the country last year interviewing tenants and residents, he was, as an architect, shocked by the dislike and contempt people told him they felt for his profession.

So he set up a radio discussion a few weeks ago to unravel what went wrong, and a group of us sat round his breakfast table in North Yorkshire, playing the game of neophiliacs and antiquarians. As in all such discussions we were typecast and fell into our appropriate roles. John Donat recalled the excitement of his youth. "I came into architecture in the year of the Festival of Britain, and it was *electric*. We were moving into a new world."

Denise Robertson, filling the vox pop role, talked about the reassuring grandeur of St George's Hall, Liverpool, and of yearnings for cottages with roses round the door. Challenged for her backward-lookingness, she replied: "If the new was good perhaps we would welcome it, but the new is not good. That's why we hanker for the past, because the alternative is not an appetising one." My own task was to sidestep the issue of design and to stress that what matters is the principle of dweller control.

But behind the games people play, there is a huge shift in the national mood, of which architecture is an obvious and visible sign. In the world of art, patrons are throwing out their abstract impressionists and buying up Victorian genre paintings. In penal policy we have abandoned the rehabilitative experiments and rely on a policy of containment. In education, every ministerial statement indicates a yearning for the no-nonsense utilitarianism of the school boards of a century ago.

I don't think the architectural change of mood is necessarily part of the same syndrome. It is a swing of the pendulum from the arrogant technological romanticism of the postwar decades. But it is skilfully exploited politically, along with the heritage boom and the "upstairs-downstairs" country house legend. Cultivate the conservation of an imaginary past to cover up the opportunism of the present, and hire advertising agencies to ram home the message.

Apart from the professional neophiliacs and a handful of intrepid explorers, we are all antiquarians now.

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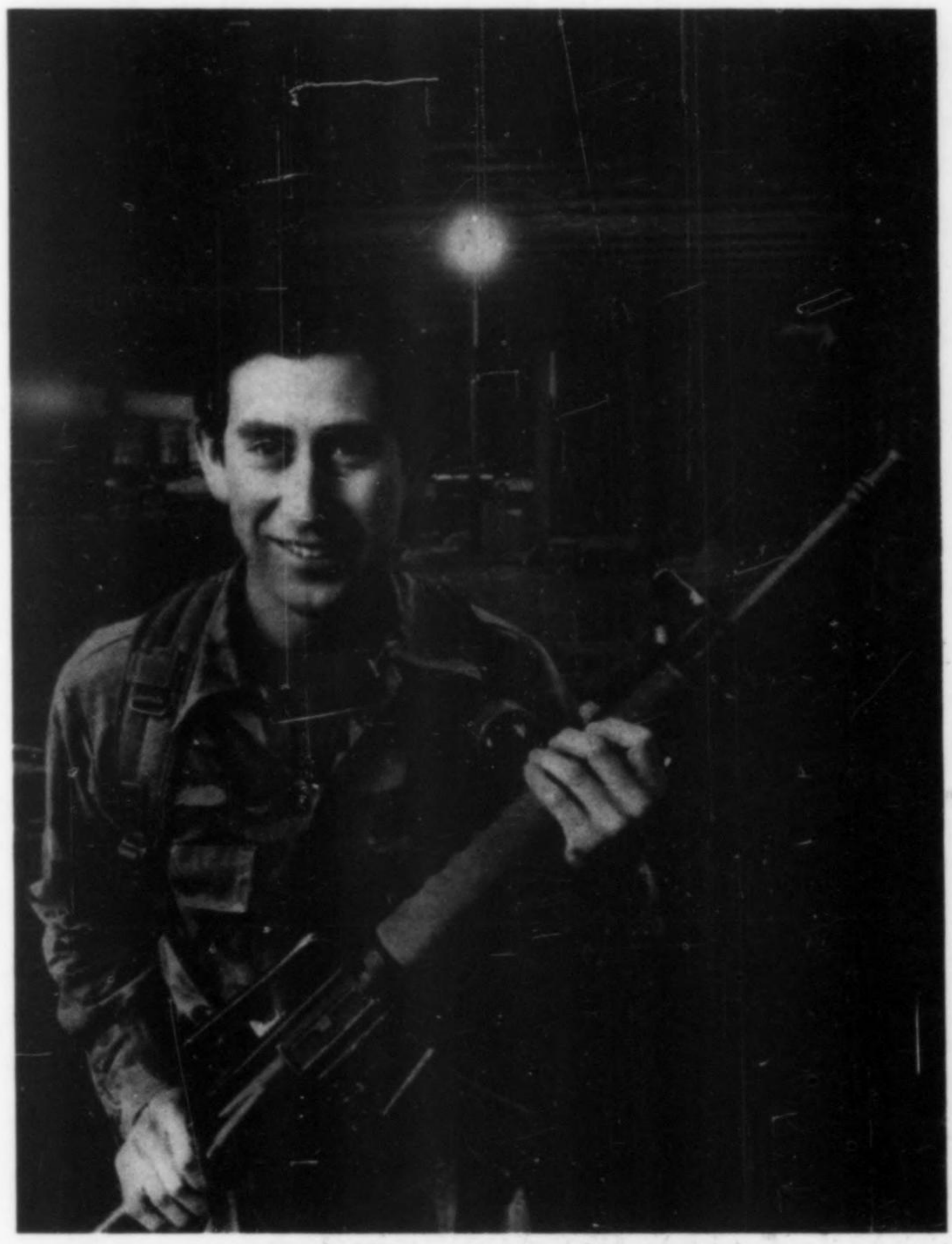
Charlie's Army



Our country needs a community army to take out the hooligans and protect the old, say the Good and the Great, led by Prince Charles. But they are marching into battle to Douglas Hurd's political tune

Marina Warner: tales of monstrous innocence

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Norman Stone on Soviet democracy; Alex Cockburn: Israeli's iron fist

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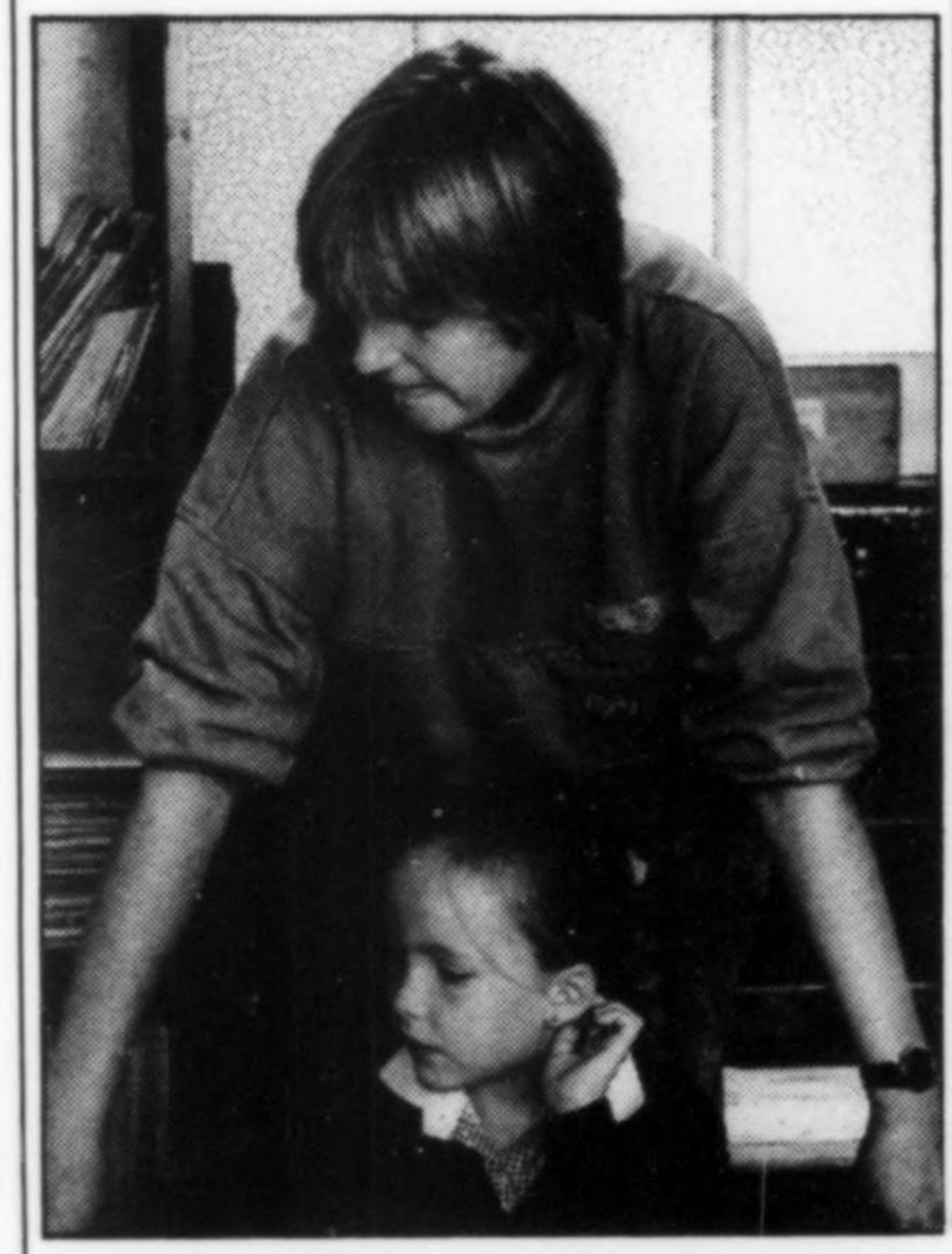

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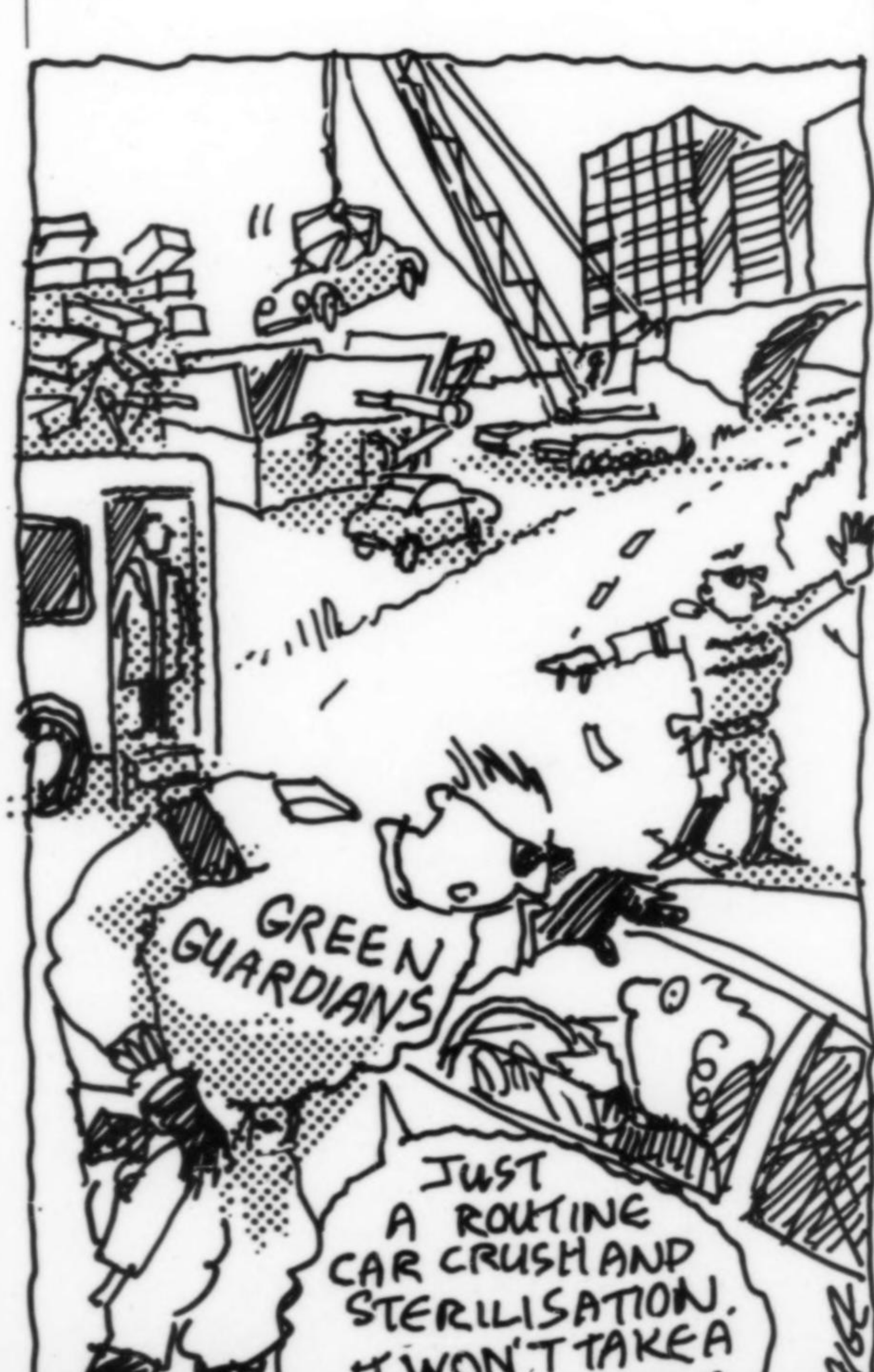
flaw in Green thinking: policy-makers are mostly middle-class and have little sensitivity towards the powerless and poor. They start by thinking about numbers, not about people.

The New Economics Foundation, an educational charity that promotes sustainable uses of resources, justice and conservation, says that the situation is far more complicated than "trite" statements that fewer people would consume less would suggest. The key, it argues, is not total numbers but the distribution of resources between the richer and poorer parts of the world. Just because our numbers diminish doesn't mean we will consume any less—as individuals, we might even consume more.

According to Population Concern, a charity that links birth control with development issues, numbers in the UK are likely to drop from 57.1 million in 1988 to 56.6 million in 2020. World population trends show that numbers in affluent parts of the world are relatively stable while those in parts of Africa, Asia and South America are still growing fast. Even the Chinese attempts at enforced one-child-per-family policies seem to have broken down with fertility rates rising to 2.4 children per woman from the earlier rate of 2.1. And reports from China of infanticide, especially of new-born girls, have continued. Currently, the UK fertility rate is 1.8 children per woman. The lesson is that well-being stems the population explosion more surely than heavy-handed state intervention. Far better for the Green Party to concentrate on helping poor people get better access to food, health care and education, if they really want to control the world's numbers.

**A Green Manifesto. MacDonald Optima, £6.99 (paperback)*


GREEN GUARDIANS
JUST A ROUTINE CAR CRUSH AND STERILISATION. IT WON'T TAKE A MOMENT MADAME
PAIGE

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward gets steamed up over water racketeering

There is something malevolently devious about the government's responses to environmental issues. It first brushes aside public concern, then suppresses facts and denounces independent investigations as irresponsible. Then, in spite of allegedly supporting the principle that the polluter must pay, it scolds the green lobbyists as pernickety children. "If you insist on being so fussy, *you* must expect to foot the bill."

Its first concern is the effect on its strategy of selling off publicly-owned natural monopolies. Ignoring all our worries about accidents and waste disposal, it declares that nuclear power is clean as opposed to dirty old coal. Thus, at one stroke, it seeks to ensure the future of its nuclear weapons programme, *and* pursue its vendetta against the miners, *and* rebuke the anti-nuclear greens. And if the market itself is too prudent to invest in nukes, it slaps a levy on every electricity user. The consumer must pay.

Over water pollution and privatisation there is the same duplicity. Here in England's corn belt our local papers, the *Eastern Daily Press* and the *East Anglian Daily Times*, neither noted for their radicalism, get shriller week by week as the government unfolds its strategy. East Anglia has the biggest problem over nitrate levels because of the concentration on intensive cereal production in a region of low rainfall.

The situation is going to get steadily worse because vast quantities of nitrate in the soil have yet to percolate into water sources. Applications of nitrogenous fertilisers have risen from 210,000 tonnes in 1950 to 1,470,000 tonnes in 1983 and are increasing at 9 per cent a year.

Anglian Water announced last month that the government had approved an increase in charges to consumers of 5.5 per cent above inflation for the next ten years, or 13.5 per cent per annum at current inflation rates. Anglian Water called it "tough and fair" and the water minister Michael Howard told us all that: "We cannot have a cleaner water environment unless we are prepared to pay towards the cost of it."

At the same time, the Water Authorities Association dismissed the Friends of the Earth survey of water pollution as an "exceedingly well-presented piece of scaremongering". According to Paul Brown in the *Guardian*, the moment the water bill was enacted, "all staff at the Anglian Water Authority were warned that statements about water quality must be cleared with the organisation's lawyers and merchant bankers. They were also told that the penalty for non-compliance was up to seven years in prison, and an unlimited fine under section 77 of the Financial Services Act, 1986."

And, of course, the National Farmers Union has been busy protecting its members. Deputy president David Naish said that the NFU: "Will be encouraging parliament to scrutinise the legislation very carefully and if necessary amend it so as to ensure that farmers will be fully and fairly compensated for any losses they might suffer, whether through reductions in income or in the value of their interest in the land."

It has already given this encouragement to the House of Lords, whose European Community Committee reports that if the government is to comply with the European Commission's directive on nitrate levels in drinking water, more than half of the most fertile farmland in East Anglia will have to be taken out of production.

What about going organic? A farmer interviewed on Radio 4's *Farming Today* programme explained that only about 10,000 or 11,000 tonnes of organic grain is produced in this country. Since the changeover takes several years, we are actually importing organically produced cereals to meet the increasing demand. And the economics of it? After all, the Fertilisers Manufacturers Association (FMA) claims that in the Anglian Water area it is unlikely that financially viable farming would be possible in water production areas, and that "net income from agriculture could be cut by 50 per cent or more".

But that organic farmer said last month that he achieved two-thirds of the chemical yield, and that he was getting £200 a tonne, as opposed to the £115-£120 a tonne offered that day in Lincolnshire for ordinary grain. However, Mr Naish of the NFU says, without explanation, that a return to traditional organic methods of farming could actually lead to an increase in existing nitrate levels.

The NFU, the FMA and UKASTA (the agricultural supply trade association) all claim that the most cost-effective option is not cutting back on inorganic fertilisers, but blending high- and low-nitrate water, or denitrification. And who is to pay? Why, you, of course, says the government. This is what stung the *East Anglian Daily Times* to declare: "When householders see their bills, they will be loud in demanding that the polluter should be made to pay, and they will be well justified."

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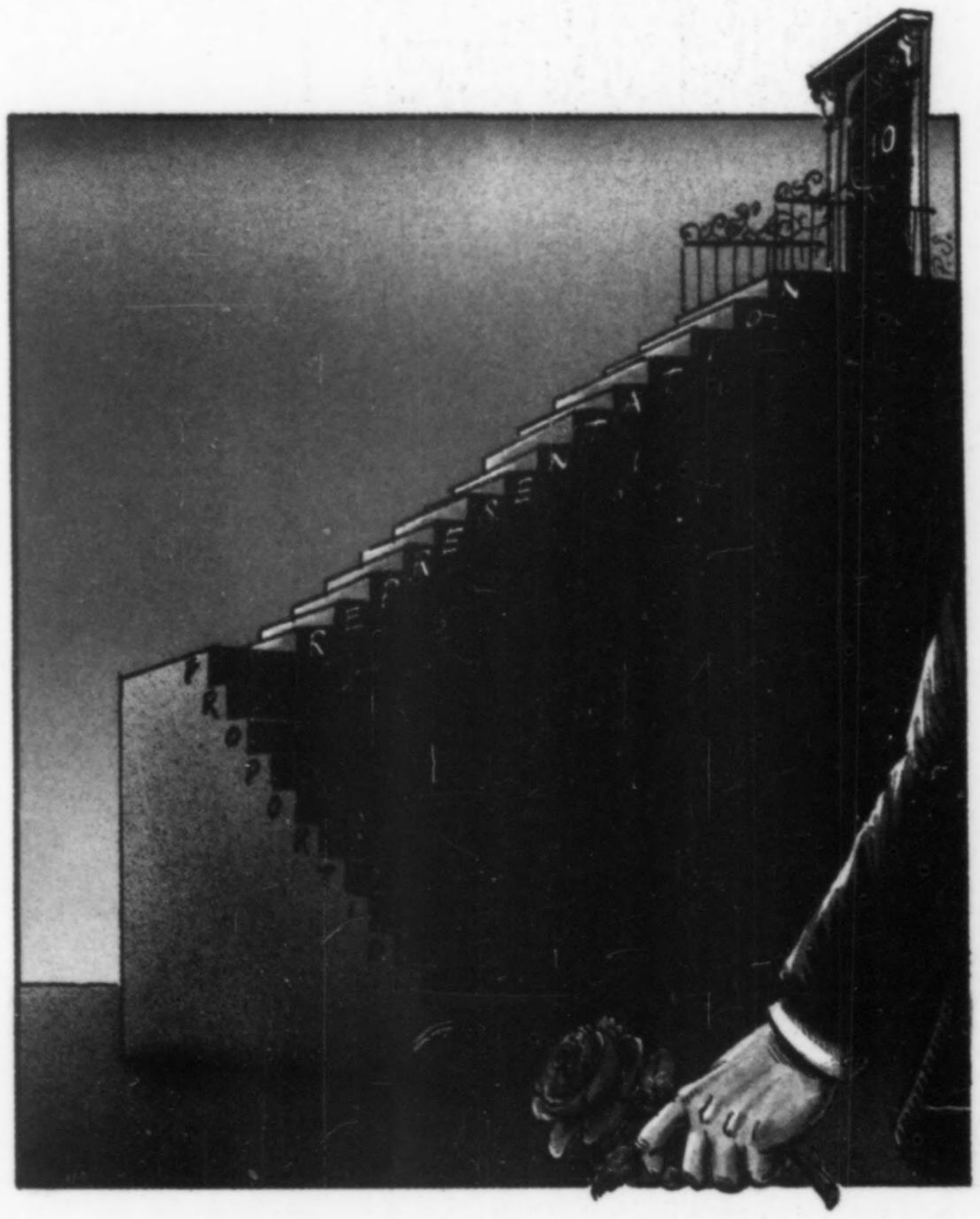
Labour can win

E L Doctorow: Gangsterdom of the spirit

The Tamil refugees Britain sent back to be tortured

Sir Michael Levey on Thatcher's museums; R W Johnson on her universities



Labour can win. But first they must become the party of democracy and make proportional representation *the* central issue. A new opinion poll shows the public knows it. Will Labour Listen?

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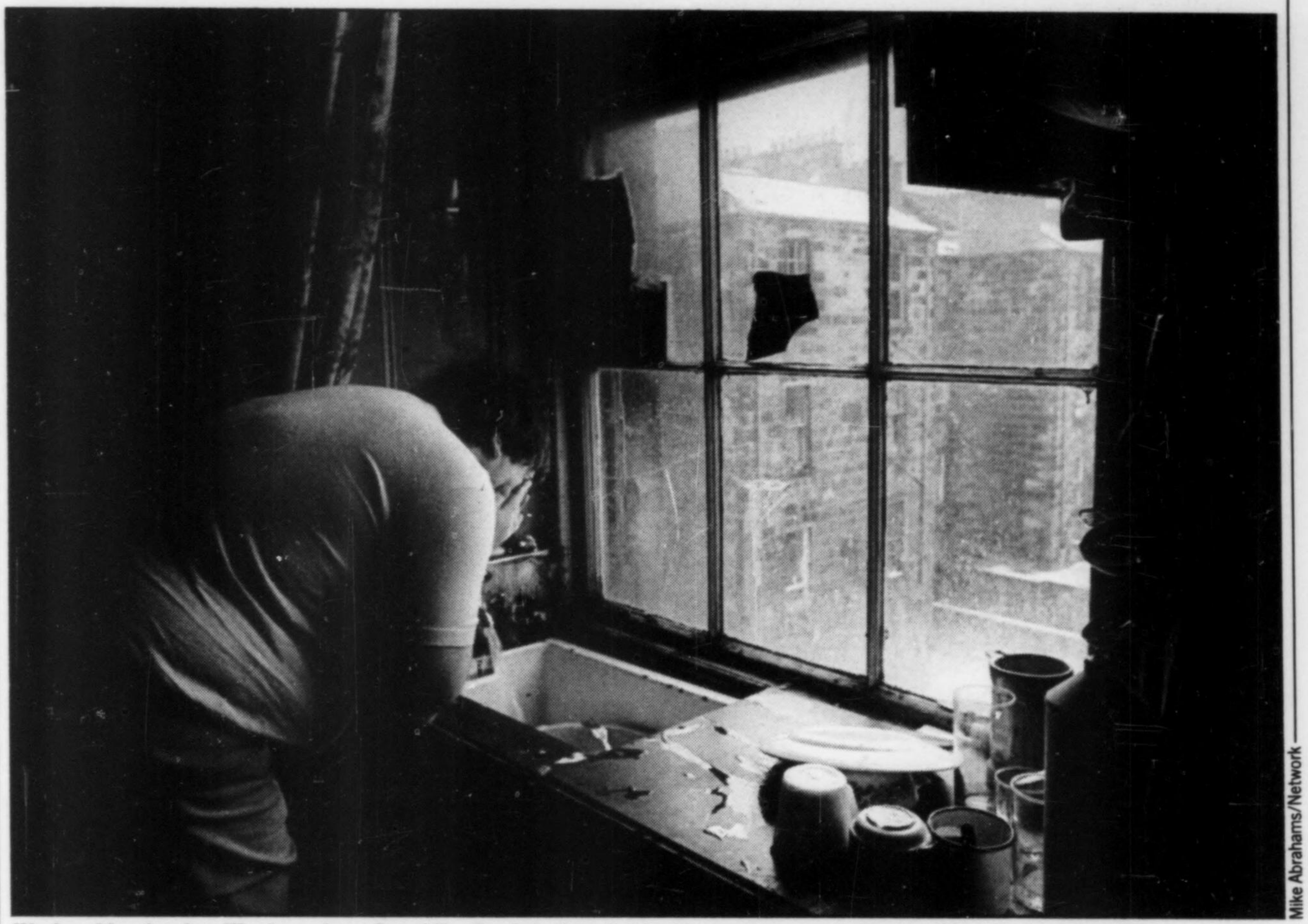

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Mike Abrahams/Network

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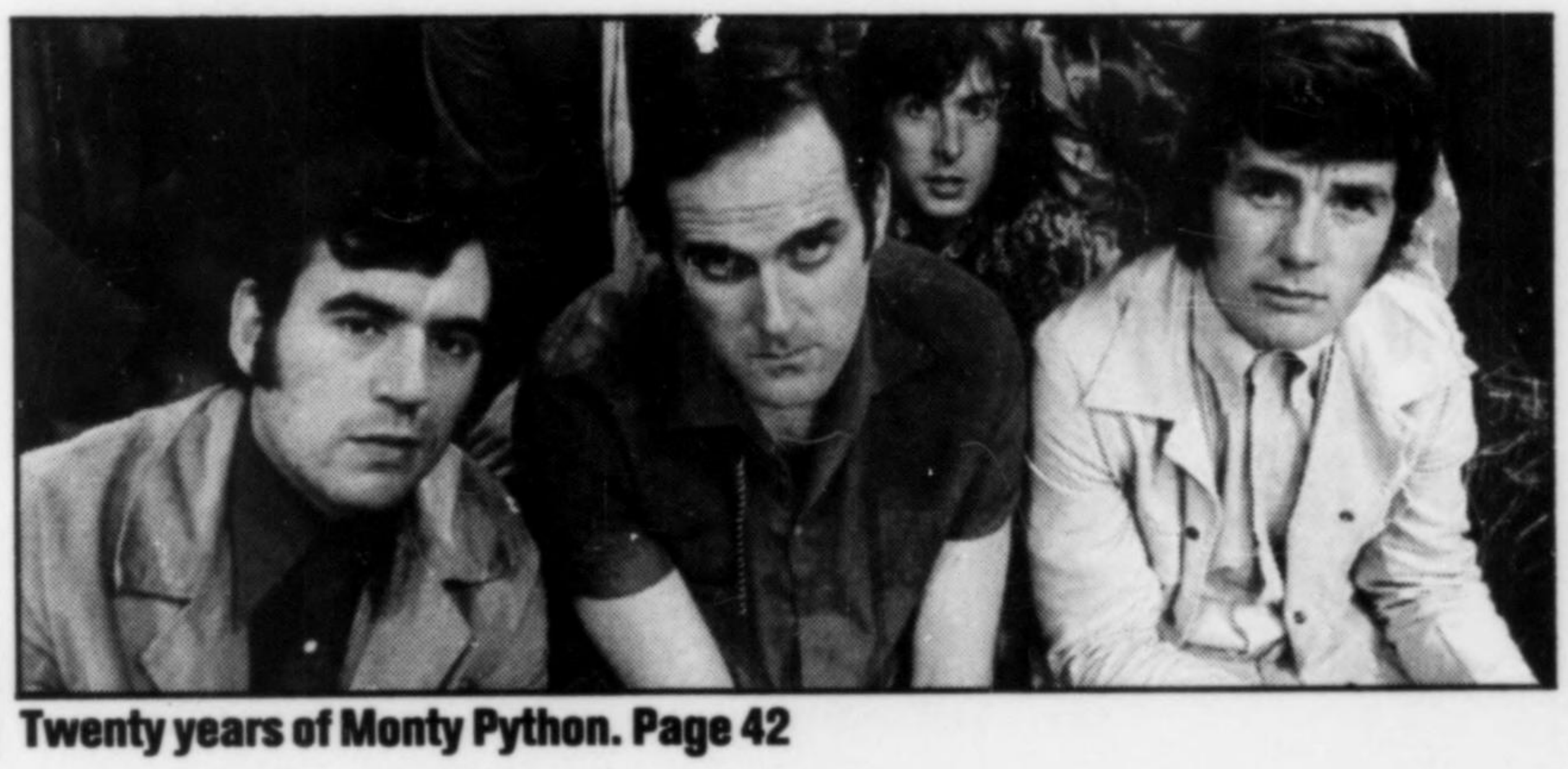

Twenty years of Monty Python. Page 42

deprivation and early death or disability is also moving fast. One success of the Edinburgh research group is in demonstrating how bad housing, independently of other aspects of deprivation, affects health. Some forms of respiratory disease have been traced to spores from fungi in damp and dilapidated housing. Mould spores produce respiratory problems such as asthma, rhinitis and alveolitis. Certain viruses appear to thrive in damp conditions.

Environmental pollution is a logical extension of the housing effect. There is growing concern about the role of pollutants, especially air-borne metal particles, in areas of the inner city and communities bordering industrial plants. But the links with health are not easy to establish. Mortality in Middlesbrough, for example, was found to be a lot higher than in Sunderland, and this could not be accounted for by known indicators of deprivation. Some thought this might be a temporary blip in the statistics, which covered only three years.

Peter Phillimore has now completed an important follow-up study confirming the consistency of the difference right through the years 1976 to 1985. This may be explained by the additional pollution on the south bank of the Tees, but this cause will not be easy to pin down. The government's and the local authorities' statistical units are too poorly organised to study links between different forms of area pollution and area mortality.

Peter Townsend is professor of social administration at Bristol University.
Society Today next week will be on health statistics.

Sunil Gupta/Network

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward remembers the Peckham Health Centre

Kenneth Clarke expostulated to a radio interviewer the other day: "We've never run the health service as some kind of workers' cooperative."

More's the pity, I would say. But the real tragedy is that we have never run a health service, only an illness service. By stressing the word *health*, I don't mean preventive medicine, I mean the pursuit of the conditions for personal, family and social well-being. There was one unforgettable experiment in this direction, and it died with the foundation of the NHS. This was the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham.

For people like me, curious about the preconditions for resourcefulness and independence, it was a verification of our deepest convictions. The founders were a husband-and-wife pair of doctors, Innes Pearse and George Scott Williamson. In 1938, they wrote about their Family Health Club: "It seems that 'a sort of anarchy' is the first condition in any experiment in human applied biology. This condition is also that to which our members most readily respond..."

It began much earlier, in 1926, when after welfare work in south London they concluded that most urban dwellers were so "de-vitalised" that babies were born deficient in health. To study the characteristics of health they devised the idea of a family club, to be joined on two conditions, first, that the whole family must join; and second, that families must agree to a periodic medical examination.

They started in a small house run as a club until 1929. The next step was to raise the money from charitable trusts to move to a purpose-built family club big enough to be self-supporting from subscriptions. By 1935 they had raised the cash and built the Pioneer Health Centre, designed by Sir Owen Williams. It was glass-walled inside and out, as the Peckham biologists needed to observe what members actually did. The centre of the building was a swimming pool, and there was a theatre, a gymnasium and a children's nursery on the ground floor, with dance halls, a cafeteria, a library and medical rooms.

It ran from 1935 to 1939, and after the war from 1946 to 1950. It ended in 1951 after all efforts to get it adopted by local authorities or the NHS had failed. Since "health centres" had become part of official doctrine after the National Health Service Act of 1946, the directors approached the Ministry of Health to incorporate it into official provision.

They failed for five reasons: first, it was concerned exclusively with the study and cultivation of health, not with the treatment of disease; second, it was based exclusively on the integrated family, not on the individual; third, it was based exclusively on a locality, it had no "open door"; fourth, its basis was contributory (2s 6d—12.5p—a family a week), not free; and fifth, it was based on autonomous administration, and so didn't conform to the NHS structure.

The centre died but the idea did not. Pioneer Health Centre Ltd still exists and in the past ten years has ensured the republication by the Scottish Academic Press of all the old Peckham reports. The same publishers have just brought out, at £7.95, a new study called *Being Me and Also Us: Lessons from the Peckham experiment.* The author is Alison Stallibrass, a Peckham veteran and author of that modern classic of child development, *The Self-Respecting Child.*

Her book is fascinating from several points of view. First, she has sought out people who were members as children or young parents and gathered their recollections of what the place meant in their lives. It is an enormously impressive testimony. Second, she shows how ahead of their time the Peckham pioneers were.

They were founder members of the Soil Association and took on a farm to ensure that members could buy nutritious bread, milk and vegetables and to provide holidays in the sun. Fifty years later, old Peckham hands remember that delicious bread. Third, she demonstrates how the preoccupation with the family was not a limiting, but an enlarging, factor. Members gradually accepted all the children as part of the family, while children and adolescents related to all the adults.

Finally, she asks and ventures answers to the question: could we replicate the experiences of Peckham today? The original building cost about a fifth of the typical super-cinema of the period, though it was expensive to run. A modern equivalent would be far more useful in any community than the standard local "leisure centre" which caters for a narrow band of the population and has no links with the ideology of self-catering, health-counselling, personal and social autonomy.

I only went there once, in 1949. I listened to Scott Williamson wittily addressing a meeting of the London Anarchist Group, and I visited Innes Pearse when she retired to Argos Hill windmill in Sussex. I never realised until I read this book that they must be considered as *the* truly creative figures in 20th century social medicine.

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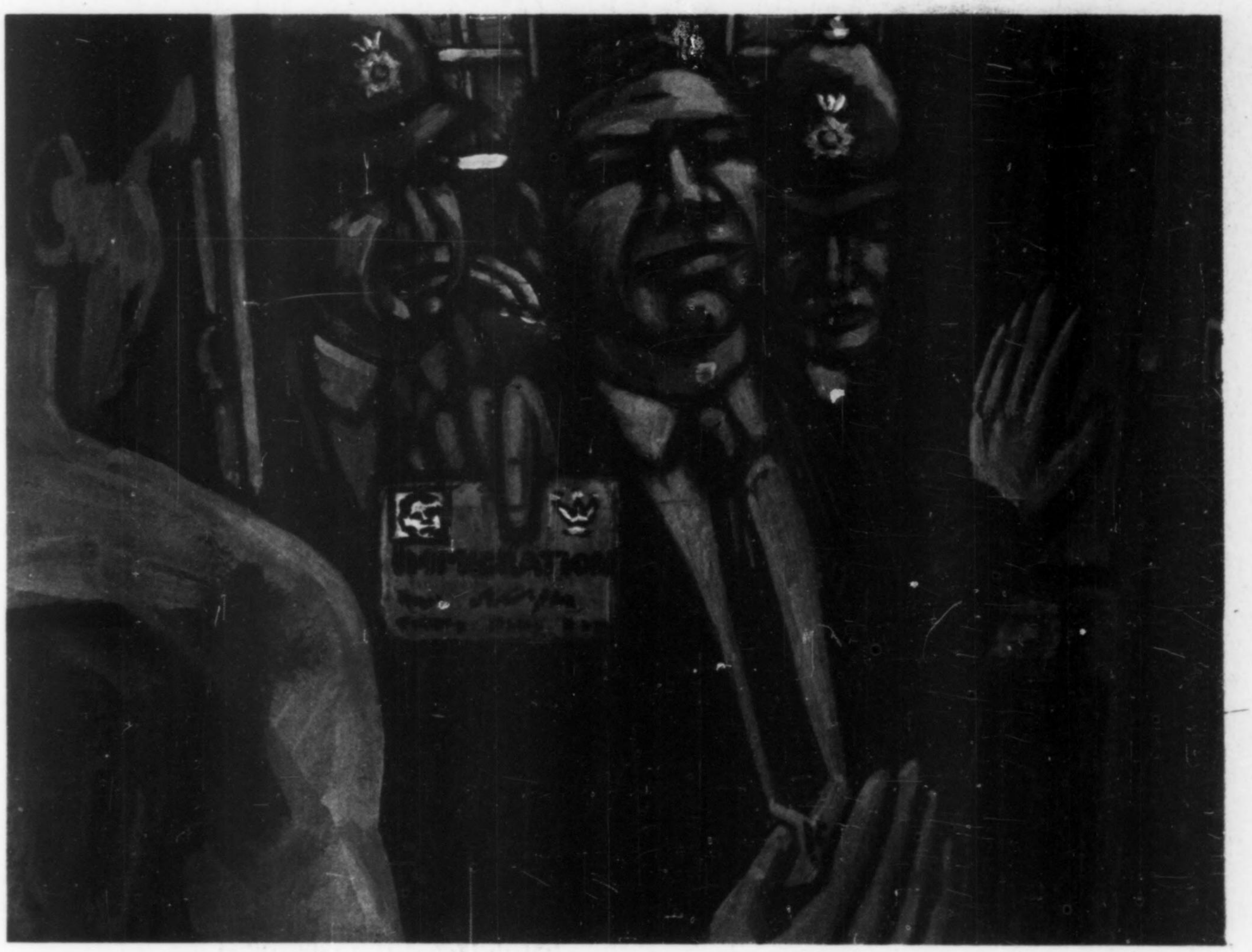

Bruce Robinson slams advertising

Michael Walzer: politics and the good life

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Dawn raid

It's the police. They're looking for illegal immigrants and threaten to smash in the door. The only evidence is an anonymous note—about a person who doesn't exist

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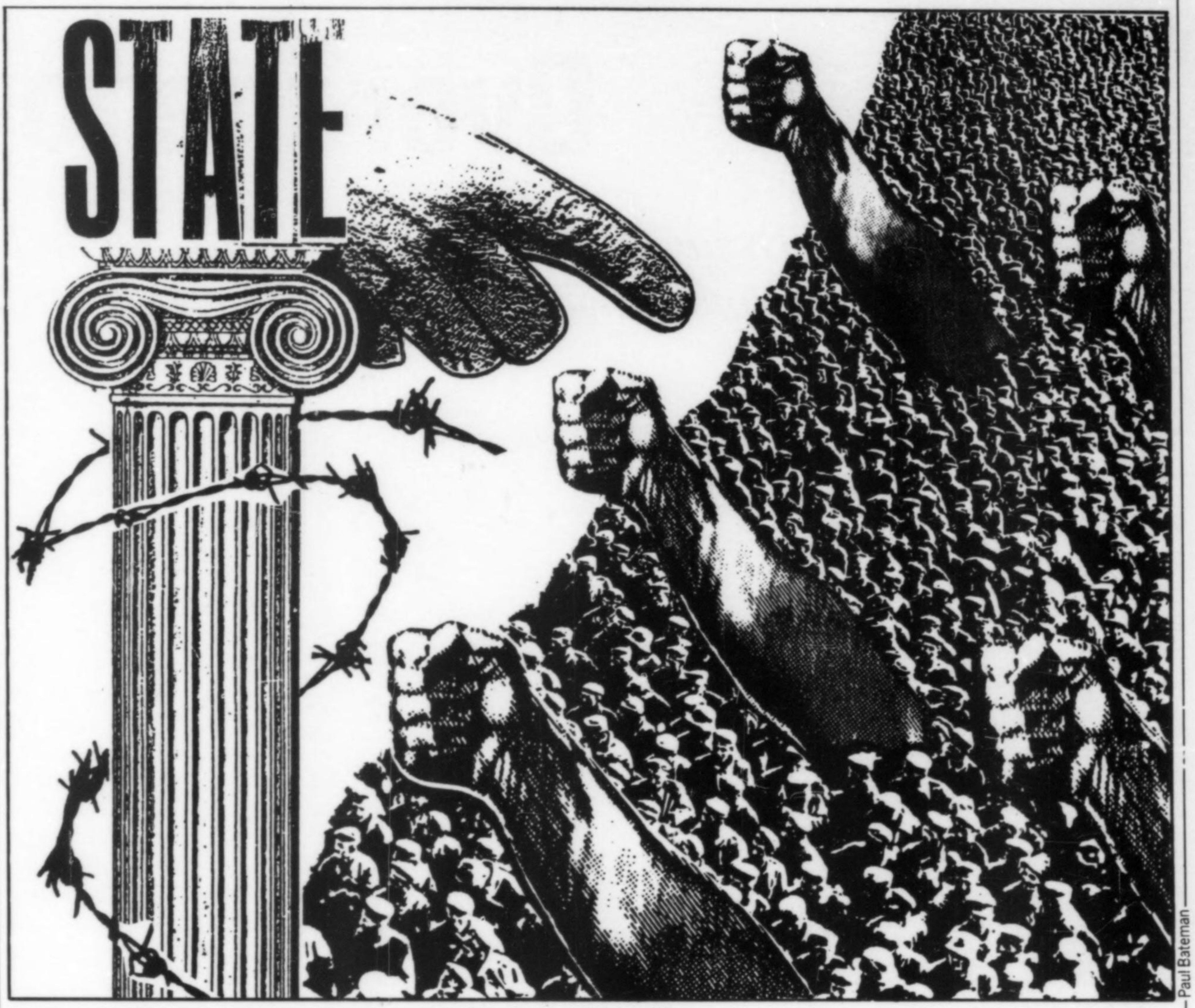

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move any opportunity for them to increase the family's income. As a result they can seldom afford to go out, and the demands of Liz's unpaid job drastically limit any wider family or social life. She also points out that their costs are higher than other people's—for example, extra laundry and cleaning. The demands of her job are such that, she says, she gets to the point of not wanting to get up in the morning, knowing what lies ahead. Liz maintains that "carers want people, especially those holding the purse strings, to realise that carers do a job of work, with no bonuses, no overtime or nightshift pay, and no paid holidays".

The Carers' National Association and 25 other carers' and disability organisations are campaigning for a big relaxation in the £12 earnings rule, simplification of regulations so that more carers can actually get Invalid Care Allowance, and a big uprating in the allowance so that it more properly reflects earnings foregone. Nearly 3.5 million carers below retirement age are effectively denied the opportunity to have decently paid jobs. The web of social security rules keeps millions of carers and their families in a poverty trap.

The Carers' National Association says the government *has* promised to aid carers, particularly with regard to guarantees for respite care facilities, and the association hopes that carers will be included from the beginning when care packages are being negotiated with local authorities and other agencies. But so far there is little indication in the forthcoming white paper of any wholesale measure to take carers out of the poverty trap. The carer's job is hard enough anyway, so on what basis does the government justify these economic penalties?

Sally and Richard Greenhill

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward muses on the revolution that really happened—in dentistry

Francis Lambert, the forge-worker interviewed by Ronald Blythe for his classic *Akenfield*, thought that one of the good things about TV was the chance it offered him of seeing wonderful ornamental ironwork. As an instance of this he cited the continual close-ups of the gates of the Winter Palace in Eisenstein's film *October*.

I was reminded that we each have a special style of viewing when I came to London for a farewell lunch with Peter, the dentist. We had both seen on the previous night Frederic Rossif's old documentary *To Die in Madrid.* I was dismissive of it, disliking the way it slid over the fact that the popular revolution of 1936 had been destroyed in the interests of Stalin's foreign policy long before Franco's victory, and hating those facile shots of people in heroic poses using up ammunition as though there was an endless supply: the opposite of the truth.

Peter's reaction had been different. He had observed from those old newsreel close-ups of workers and peasants that the teeth of the Spanish poor of the 1930s were in better condition than those of their British counterparts. The Spanish were ill-fed, but with the elements of a less destructive diet. I realised that Peter must have a peculiar way of seeing the footage from the gritty British documentaries of the 1930s where the poor, even before middle age, had sunken jaws while their children's mouths were already full of decay.

His professional lifetime has witnessed an admittedly incomplete, but substantial, dental revolution, revealed by visual evidence.

We were meeting on the very day of his retirement, as I had been a patient of his for more than 40 years. Peter qualified in 1939 and became a houseman at the London hospital in Whitechapel, immersed first in the poverty of the East End and then in the extraordinary improvisations and camaraderie of the blitz. Called up, he became a Navy dentist, sent to the *Dunluce Castle*, a former cruise ship torpedoed early in the war in Scapa Flow. Beached in shallow water, the hull was filled with concrete and it was used as a naval depot. He was soon posted away but I spent most of the war years in Orkney, in a company of the Royal Engineers, among the ragtail and bobtail of civilian contractors and Italian prisoners employed in building the causeways that now link the islands around Scapa. If we were sick we went to the naval medical centre.

Peter's recollections are that the doctors had a relatively easy time, apart from enemy action and accidents, since Navy personnel were selected for physical fitness. But dentists were worked off their feet, trying to bring recruits up to the standard of oral hygiene that the services, but not civilian life, demanded. His memory did not exaggerate. In the year he qualified, the Political and Economic Planning report on Britain's health revealed that 98 per cent of Army recruits, 96.8 per cent of Navy recruits and 95 per cent of school children suffered from dental decay.

In 1947 I was working in the same part of London where he put up his brass plate. He has moved upwards and I have moved outwards, but ever since then I have looked forward to our twice-yearly gossip. It's important to recall the huge change in the British attitude to teeth which his generation of dentists had engineered. (I give the credit to the practitioners rather than to the NHS simply because anything remotely like "free" dental care, except for children, is by now just a memory.)

For we can both remember the days when large sections of the population, after a bout of toothache, considered it both normal and desirable to have everything extracted in successive weeks and to opt for a lifetime of dentures. "Let's get it over and done with, once and for all," was a widespread attitude.

He also remembers patients who felt cheated if he insisted on preserving as many teeth as possible. He blames current complaints that dentists invent occasions for unnecessary fillings, both on the bad eggs you find in every profession and on what he regards as the unsatisfactory structure of NHS payments.

One of his passions is architecture. I suppose his own work is a kind of precision engineering, and I tend to see him in architectural terms. Paul Thompson's biography of a great Victorian architect describes how William Butterfield, after a period of ruthless demolition, decided that he intended "on principle, to reuse as much of the old work as possible in the reconstruction". Patrick Geddes similarly called for "conservative surgery" as the right approach to environmental design.

Peter's approach to my teeth has always been like that. For decades now he has been saying: "Well, we'll just have to make the best of what you've got." And that's what he's done for most of my life.

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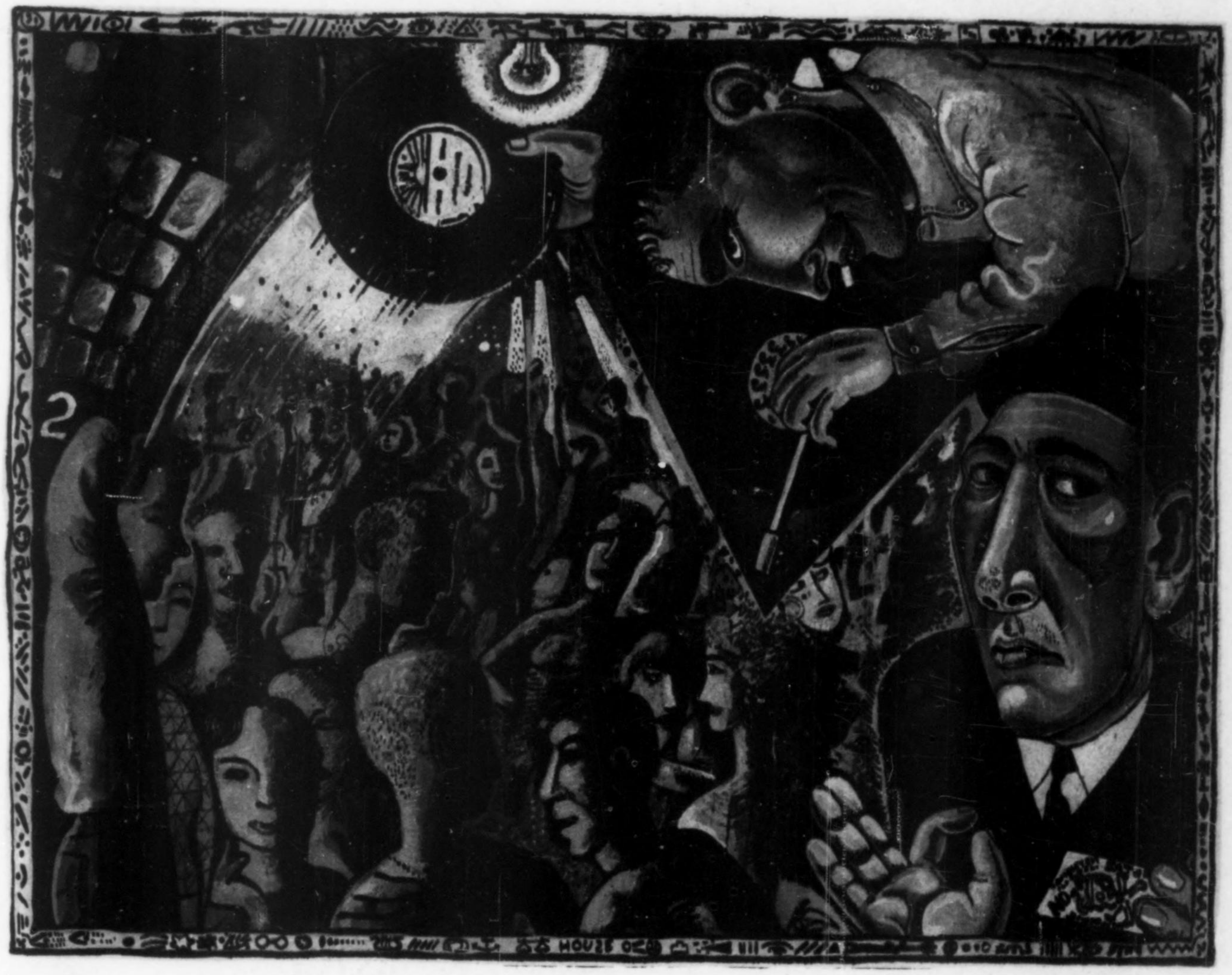

Thatcherite politics without Thatcher; the economic slide to skid row

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Alan Sinfield: good culture and gays

John Lloyd: communism dies in Hungary; Malu Halasa: an opposition is born in East Germany

Acid enterprise

Warehouse parties launched the most influential music scene post-punk. Then the entrepreneurs muscled in. Street life meets the market. Stuart Cosgrove reports

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Hulton Picture Company

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is a form of six-day week. At each pit, management arranges for groups of up to 50 miners to work over weekends. Individual contracts are drawn up with the men. They are paid an agreed fee for completing set tasks or cutting a certain amount of coal. The attraction of this system for British Coal is it keeps pits open and increases output. The results have been dramatic, with a 40 per cent rise in productivity in Nottingham since the strike to 4.5 tonnes per man shift—one of the highest levels in the country.

The UDM has given its cautious welcome to flexible working, arguing that its members benefit from weekend bonuses which can be greater than their basic weekly wage. The NUM, by contrast, is vociferously opposed, both in Nottingham and on a national level. It sees contracting as a means of dividing the workforce by creating a pay hierarchy while depressing general pay levels.

Predictably, the coal board has exploited these divisions within the miners' ranks, just as it did during the strike. Last year it said all new pits would be awarded to the UDM, in exchange for six-day flexible working. Asfordby, in Leicestershire, and Margam in South Wales, are likely to be the first of several new superpits to fall to the union early in the new decade.

The last four years of UDM control has confirmed the union movement's fear that breakaways weaken solidarity and power. The Nottingham workforce has been fragmented since the strike. Not only does the rift between the NUM and UDM still run strong, with friends, neighbours and even families at loggerheads. Miners are now also being separated by the weight of their pay packets. A coalface worker can earn up to £500 a week on the contract system— nearly three times as much as colleagues underground and on the surface.

The result of this gradual whittling away of unity is that Notts miners have been unable to rally themselves against the coal board's ravages. Despite the UDM's special relationship, Nottingham has been treated by British Coal just as ruthlessly and unpredictably as any other part of the country. Since the strike, 12 out of 26 collieries have been closed and the workforce slashed by more than half to 14,000.

The latest pit to be shut down, Blidworth, was thought to have up to 30 years productive life left. The UDM had already accepted flexible working and expected the pit to become fully viable by May this year. But British Coal was not prepared to wait and closed the pit in February, giving 800 men only one month's notice.

As a final gesture, Blidworth miners were balloted on whether they wanted to put the pit through a six months' review procedure, but most UDM members opted for enhanced redundancy pay instead. NUM members, who formed almost a third of the workforce, were not allowed to vote at all.

Blidworth's NUM branch secretary, Pete Savage, who lost his job in February, has no sympathy for his UDM colleagues. "They've got what they wanted, haven't they? Pit closures and massive unemployment. They believed that by sucking up to British Coal they'd get special treatment, but they haven't. They have been trampled on like the rest of us."

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward teases out risks and freedoms in traffic

I don't suppose that, beetling around the suburbs of Hull in his Singer Gazelle, Philip Larkin was a menace to anyone except himself. But it was intriguing to hear on Radio 4 his correspondence with the novelist Barbara Pym. "Did I tell you that I am learning to drive?" he wrote. "It's terrifying, and merely serves to intensify my amazement at the low figure of road accidents. Considering how many cars there are, and how lethal they are, and who is driving them, I should expect half the population to be in hospital or in the grave."

Learning from the passenger seat that the art of driving is intelligent anticipation of the actions of other road users, I have always shared his amazement. Our usual response is the opposite. Sensibly, we stress the horror of road accident rates by comparison with other causes of premature death like war and murder. The second world war killed 305,318 British soldiers and civilians. Between 1926 and 1976, 331,214 people were killed on British roads.

The US has far more cars, and there, between 1913 and 1976, the number of people killed on the road was more than three times the number of Americans killed in every single war in which the US was involved. John Adams, lecturer in geography at University College, London, stresses that these figures include the Vietnam war, Korean war, second world war, first world war, Spanish American war, civil war (both sides), Mexican war, war of 1812 and war of independence.

Yet when you relate accident figures to the numbers of vehicles and mileages, you find that the US is one of the safest driving countries in the world. Contrary to our film image of high-speed chases, an overwhelming majority of American motorists behave with immaculate discipline. We Europeans are far behind, and so are Latin Americans, Africans and Asians.

Whenever I meet traffic engineers I ply them with questions. I find them to be, not ogres intent on carving up country and town to get the traffic through, but serious people deeply sceptical of the demands made on them by politicians and the public. Take Sir Colin Buchanan, whose report in the 1960's did *not* recommend pushing motorways through cities. What he actually said was that if the community "finds that some proposed set of measures is altogether too expensive and too disruptive of familiar scenes, then it can have less expensive and less disturbing measures, *provided it is reconciled to not having as much traffic*".

Or take Sir Herbert Manzoni, the engineer whose name will go down in history as the man who carved up Birmingham for the benefit of the motorist. I actually heard him remark: "The average passenger load of motorcars in our streets is certainly less than two persons, and in terms of transportable load some 400 cubic feet of vehicle weighing over one ton is used to convey four cubic feet of humanity weighing about two hundredweight, the ratios being about ten to one in weight and 100 to one in bulk. The economic implication of this situation is ridiculous and I cannot believe it to be permanent."

Last year I met Barry Cooper, a traffic engineer, who had been an articled pupil of Manzoni, and I buttonholed him with my usual importunate questions. On national differences in accident rates he explained that in countries like the US, the children in the back seat behind mum and dad had absorbed that empathy with the actions of others that make aware drivers. In countries with first-generation motorists this automatic road wisdom has to be expensively absorbed in the driver's seat.

His second response was far more disturbing. He believes that training courses for 16-year-old motorcyclists actually increase their proneness to accidents. "Oh, for goodness sake!" I exclaimed, but he went on to explain calmly that every increase in confidence that you give a road user leads to an increase in risk-taking, and consequently in vulnerability.

Opinions like this are not what we want to hear. John Adams had used a barrage of statistical data to make the same point about our various bits of legislation designed to protect road users. He wrote two books which argue, among other things, that legislation on matters like motorcycle helmets or seat belts has a different effect from the ones which were expected.

Adams was abused from all sides in parliament for his claim that the seat belt law would temporarily reduce car occupant fatalities but would permanently increase deaths among cyclists or pedestrians. He and the people who think like him are in the uncomfortable position of appearing to support the claim for absolute liberty for the motorist, while really stressing the fact that legislation aimed at protecting car users from themselves actually decreases the freedom and safety of every other road user.

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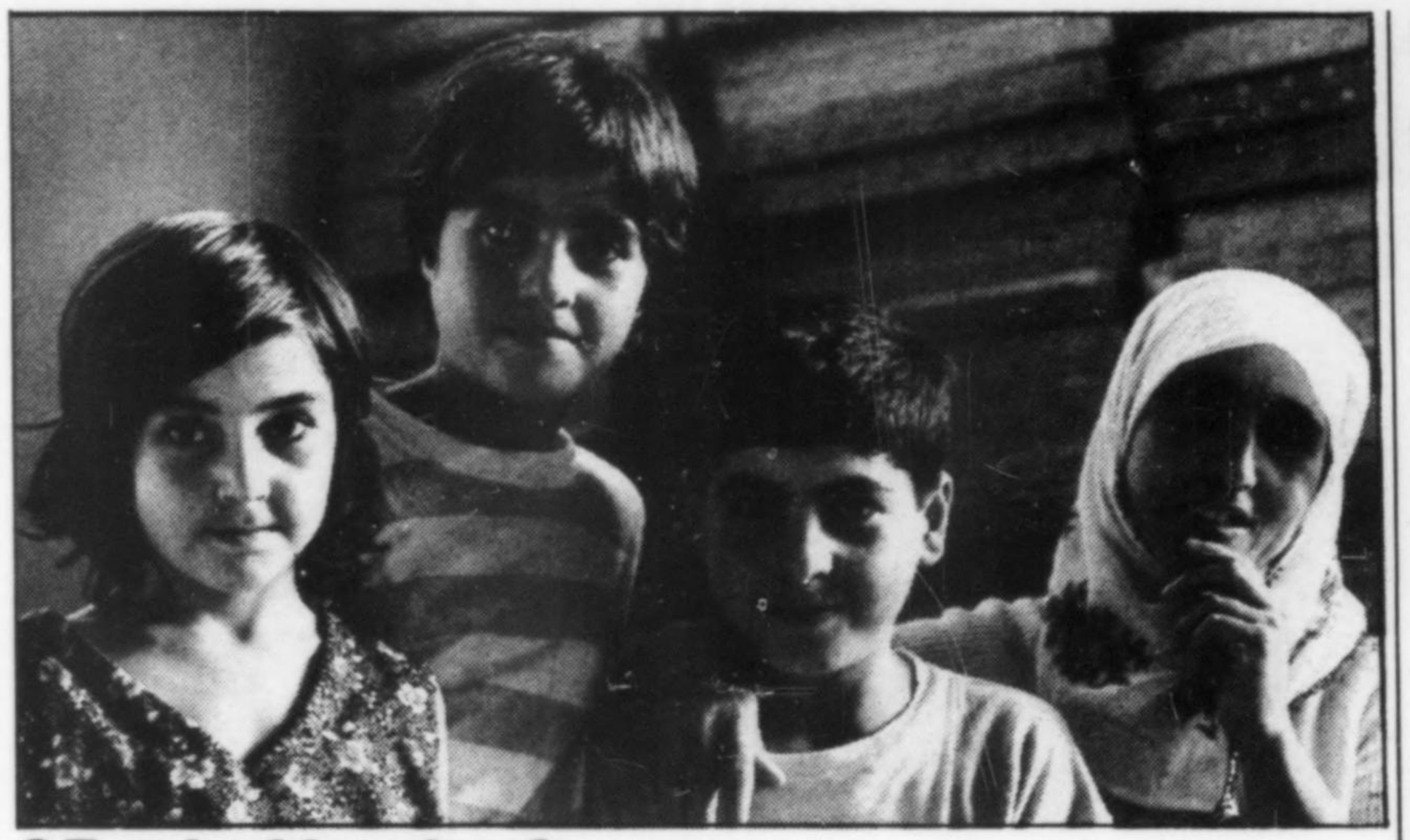

9 Torch of freedom?

Margaret Thatcher boasted in Brighton about the Tories' emblem, the torch of freedom. Yet only days earlier two human torches provided a bitter contrast. Jeremy Seabrook reports on Kurdish refugees who have fled torture and ill-treatment in Turkey, but now find themselves being denied freedom in Britain

12 Carry on spying—and dying?

The leak of MI5 documents to the IRA is the biggest security disaster in the 20-year war against the Provos. Duncan Campbell has copies of the documents. They reveal a bungling incompetence which would be truly comic—if people's lives didn't depend on their operations

18 When the cupboard is bare

Mrs Thatcher has run out of new ideas and she's now looking to the fall of communism as evidence of her power. But, argues Sarah Benton, it is a dangerous illusion for her to perceive events in Europe as world acclaim for Thatcherism and the brutal contempt for political democracy it has brought

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UNBAN
THE
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20 Getting closer every day

How long before minority rule in South Africa collapses? The release of the six ageing legends of the black opposition is merely the latest example of how its new tactical sense is beginning to pay off, reports Shaun Johnson. The ANC has effectively unbanned itself

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The Medellin cartel bosses are puny beginners. The big pushers of the world drug trade are the American tobacco companies. To find the 2.5 million new addicts a year they need just to keep their profits stable, they are increasingly targeting the poor in Asia. And the US state is backing them. Alexander Cockburn reports

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What is it like for a Muslim to live in the west? Rana Kabbani, the daughter of a Syrian diplomat, recounts her peripatetic upbringing in which she was caught between the values her people had taught her and the life she saw around her. She was pressured to view her world through the prism of western superiority—an outlook that, through her experience, she came to bitterly resent

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Asian and Afro-Caribbean people in Britain and feels able to challenge racism more effectively. As someone of mixed descent, Elaine experiences racism in a particular form: *The first person who said 'Afro-Caribbean' to me, I didn't know what she was talking about! I just said to her, 'I'm Black!' A lot of my white friends say, 'No you're not Black, I see you as white.' I really feel like screaming, saying: 'I'm not white, I'm Black!' Sometimes they are calling everybody names around me, using words like 'nigger' and I look at them and they say, 'Oh, God, I didn't mean anything.' I can't stand it when someone says, 'I didn't mean to be racist but ...'* Like others of mixed descent Elaine faces the double standards of those who, when it suits them, "do not notice" her mixed parentage; people who are happy to define her identity for her.

Not all the girls planned their futures in Britain. When I met Nazrah her family were preparing to move to Pakistan. She was looking forward to her new life there and, although she knew she would have to make adjustments, she expected to have more daily freedom: *Here girls are packed into their houses. Girls can't go out because of the dangers on the street—being attacked, mugged or raped. But over there, in the village, there are no strangers. You know everybody and you've got your relatives everywhere.*

> *"If someone asked me, 'How do you see an Asian person?' I'd say like my brother or sister, because to me they are Black"*

One year later Nazrah wrote to me from Rawalpindi: *Our house is great, it's very big too! You could say we're settled in but we do get problems quite often. The main problem is that it is so boring here. We do get the latest films on video here, yes, but all day we just roam the house or pick fights with each other. Mum and dad have changed a lot. They've become too over-protective. They say we're too innocent for the likes of people here!*

I chose to talk to both Afro-Caribbean and Asian girls and to write about them jointly because I believe we share many experiences as Black women in British society. What were their views? Tara: *I don't hang around much with white girls. I think you can share more with Black and Asian girls. I just get on better with them.* Nazrah: *I think that Blacks and Asians should stick together because they both really are outsiders in England.* Gillian: *I think that what Salman Rushdie says about Britain being two entirely different worlds is true. I don't see white people saying different things to Black people and Asian. Of course there are certain differences between us, but as far as I am concerned if someone asked me 'How do you see an Asian person?' I'd say like my brother or sister, because to me they are Black.*

"Speaking Out: Black Girls in Britain" is to be published by Virago Press on 26 October

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward tracks the invisible handbag across eastern Europe

A Hungarian remarked the other day that, "We made a very bad socialism, but my fear is that we will now make a very bad capitalism." It is all too easy to see what she meant.

A "flying university" of Anglo-American policy advisers had been busy for several years, so I've heard, making contacts through British embassies with the appropriate Ministry people to infiltrate them with the sort of ideas they fed to our own rulers. Abandon old-fashioned labour-intensive industry, give carbon-fibres preference over steel, and artificial fabrics priority over that old-fashioned cotton, peg down wages and don't give an inch to organised labour. "That's easier for you than for us," they say with a knowing smile. Large-scale unemployment, they explain, is an inevitable hiccup in the development of a leaner, really competitive industry.

There are layers of unbearable irony here. Topmost is the fact that we are about to witness a Winter of Discontent in the eastern bloc. The formerly phoney trade unions will discover that, as nobody now dares to apply the instant repression normal in the Soviet Union for 70 years and in its satellites for over 40, they can really influence events. A second factor is that the green lobby in the east is beginning to spell out the implications of the absence of even those meagre environmental controls taken for granted in the west.

Maybe Stalin's former empire will replace Britain as the easy dump for toxic wastes. Certainly market economies demand that it should become the western equivalent of South Korea or Taiwan, flooding our complacent common market with cheaper consumer durables. Gorbachev's warning to the Soviet railway workers, saying in effect, "Don't strike. You're impeding our progress towards... er... capitalism," is going to be repeated everywhere.

Think back just a little. Over 40 years ago Michael Polyani diagnosed the economic double-think of the Soviet bloc, when he observed that "under cover of the noise made by the Five Year plans the government went on quietly fitting into place one piece of commercial (ie, 'capitalist') economic machinery after another. Bit by bit every economic operation was fully commercialised. Adam Smith would have marvelled at this strange return of the 'invisible hand', doubly invisible as the carefully camouflaged secret of 'socialist' successes. Nothing could indeed be funnier than the way this kind of economics is taught in the Soviet Union. The official textbook is in two parts, nicknamed by Soviet students the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament tells you all about the evils of commercialism, or production for profits, of the fetish of commodities, of social relations being degraded to relations between goods, of the alienation of man within an acquisitive economy producing for the market. In the New Testament each of these commercial features is reintroduced, with each time renewed apologies, explaining that under socialism they are really and essentially different from what they were before, and that besides they are only temporary, etc, etc."

Today this gospel is being re-run without the apologies. The really dreadful aspect of the story is that the rulers of every country in eastern Europe, moving steadily to the right with age, have already wiped out every demand for "socialism with a human face".

They ground the left opposition out of existence or into exile, but they are now being won over by free-market managerialism, a system that guarantees their own survival. And in Hungary, Poland or the Soviet Union itself, whenever there's an anniversary, they exhume and posthumously rehabilitate a few more people who were hanged or shot when they were alleged to have been Anglo-American agents. No doubt it will happen soon in Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic.

There's an inevitable corollary of course. The same dynasties of top people who have ruthlessly run everything east of Berlin for decades will stay at the top. Having for generations urged the workers to tighten their belts for the sake of socialism they will re-issue the same imperative for the establishment of competitive capitalism.

The giant confidence trick of Jam Tomorrow is going to be worked all over again, and it isn't for us British to criticise this. But in just one respect the east Europeans have an advantage. Just to continue daily life they, like their rulers, have developed an impenetrable system of black, grey and brown economies to ensure that ordinary needs like soap, vegetables or access to the technical college are met. As eastern Europe becomes more consciously Thatcherite, and as below a certain income level we are obliged to become more and more like eastern Europe, we too are bound to develop that network of fringe benefits that actually ensure survival.

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Men of violence

British soldiers threw a three-year-old child over a wall. They knocked out a teenager's front teeth. They taunted a family mourning a still-born baby. These are the "peace keepers" of west Belfast

Miscarriages of justice: keep Hurd on the hook

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FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward finds that discovery has to be both profitable and secret to win official approval

Bill Connor was a popular journalist of a rather more enlightened kind than we get nowadays. It was in 1942, in the darkest and most bellicose days of the second world war, that he chose to remind readers of his Cassandra column in the *Daily Mirror* of the international and non-commercial nature of medical discovery.

"Our children," he wrote, "are guarded from diptheria by what a Japanese and a German did. They are saved from smallpox by an Englishman's work. They are saved from rabies because of a Frenchman. From birth to death they are surrounded by an invisible host—the spirits of men who never served a lesser loyalty than the welfare of mankind."

With the institutionalisation of research, we are no longer inclined to feel such sentiments about the big pharmaceutical companies, while publicly-funded laboratories are under extreme pressure to make their work cost-effective.

It's a sign of the marketisation of everything that the press, radio and TV reporting of the latest discovery from the Medical Research Council's Laboratory of Molecular Biology at Cambridge should in the same breath describe the new way of producing miniature forms of antibodies both as a "breakthrough" in coping with cancer and as a currency earner.

The MRC, announcing its patent applications, said that "industry" both in Britain and overseas is already gearing up to exploit the opportunities" offered by the team led by Dr Greg Winter and Dr Sally Ward. They have discovered an easier and cheaper way of producing "single domain antibodies" to clear tumours and toxins from body tissues.

The work is a development from the discovery 14 years ago in the same laboratory of a method of making a hybrid cell or "hybridoma" secreting monoclonal antibodies. In explaining its pedigree, the science editor of the *Times* says that: "Unfortunately, the Medical Research Council was unable to profit because it failed to lodge a patent application and the findings were taken up and exploited freely by most of the larger drug companies."

Naturally, there's a story behind this. It emerged five years ago when the discoverer, Cesar Milstein, his former pupil, Georges Koehler, and the father of modern immunology, Niels Jerne, were awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine. Mrs Thatcher at the time described it as another triumph for British science. Even the names of the prize-winners suggest that there was rather more to it than that. Milstein, from Argentina, works in Cambridge. Koehler, from Germany, works in Basel. Jerne, from Denmark, used to work in Basel and moved to France.

When their 1984 prizes were announced, the *Observer* headlined its science correspondent's report "Lost millions of the Nobel magic bullets", and began it with the statement that "Britain may have lost millions of pounds by failing to patent monoclonal antibodies..."

As a matter of fact Cesar Milstein behaved with the utmost propriety. Working as head of the protein and nucleic acid chemistry division of the MRC's laboratory, he had been obliged to assign to his employers all rights in his work. He wrote to them to explain its potential importance. With no answer, he and Georges Koehler published their findings in the science journal *Nature*.

Greg Winter and Sally Ward did just that this month, except that the MRC had already filed its patent claims. Milstein said to the press at the time that "really we have only seen the tip of the iceberg", and he turned out to be right. But he also made a highly significant personal comment. He said: "I think patents are financial swindles that prevent the public from having access to information. My work would have been surrounded by secrecy. I really think I would have been driven out of the country."

Anyone acquainted with researchers in fields far removed from the frontiers of medicine will know what he means. I mentioned on 13 October the traffic pundit John Adams. Interested in the proposals for road-pricing systems, he asked the police about a newly installed camera in the Dartford Tunnel. They said it belonged to the Home Office so he asked them for information. According to the *Architect's Journal*, "When it arrived, Adams was surprised to notice that the envelope had been addressed to John Underwood. In error, the sender at the Home Office had written Adams's middle name, which he never uses and which appears only on his passport. Before sending him the information—which was nothing more than a photocopy of a published article—the Home Office had done some careful checking on this innocent geographer."

Bill Connor was wrong. Research *is* obliged to serve lesser loyalties than the welfare of humankind.

Welfare Watch

Mean times

Tony Lynes laments the great pensions swindle

This week's announcement of the rates of pensions and other benefits for 1990-91 means that the basic pension, tied firmly to the price index since 1979, will fall still further behind average earnings. This year, the single person's pension rate of £43.60 a week would be £11.10 higher, at £54.70, if the Labour government's prices-or-earnings uprating formula still applied. From next April, the gap will have widened to about £12.65 a week.

Labour's current policy is to give the pension an immediate boost of at least £5 (£8 for a couple) and then resume the link with average earnings. If Labour wins the next election, however, the earliest date for implementing these changes is likely to be April 1993. By then, a single pensioner will probably need an increase of about £16 a week to restore the value of the pension relative to average earnings. There is not the slightest possibility of an increase of that magnitude. Even if the immediate cost did not rule it out, fears of rising costs as the number of pensioners rises would. What the Tories have achieved, therefore, is a deliberate and permanent reduction in the basic pension.

Ministers in the present government show no signs of remorse. They claim, with some justification, that pensioners' living standards are rising faster than those of the working population, and that other sources of income—not least the Labour government's earnings-related pensions—are making them less dependent on the basic pension. When forced to admit that large numbers of pensioners still have little more than the basic pension, they respond with small increases in means-tested income support for the over-75s.

Despite such increases, it is the poorest pensioners, on income support, who have suffered most from the breaking of the pensions-earnings link. Income support, and supplementary benefit before it, have been tied to the price index as firmly as the basic pension. The extra £2.50 a week that the over-75s received this month is less than a quarter of the amount they have lost since 1979. Not only pensioners have lost. Single parents, unemployed, sick and disabled claimants have all seen their living standards fall relative to those in work.

It would be dishonest to pretend that all was well under the last Labour government. Pensioners lost a 6 per cent rise when the uprating formula was fiddled to please the IMF in 1976. The earnings link at best only applied to pensions, not to short-term benefits. The next Labour government should start with a firm commitment to increase *all* benefits each year in line with average earnings, unless there are good reasons for doing otherwise.

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No place like home

Tories in turmoil: Sarah Benton, Anthony Barnett and R W Johnson

Political corruption: Eric Silver on India; Gore Vidal on America

Oscar Wilde tours Ireland

Dawn was born homeless. She's still homeless. It's no accident: the government knew it would happen. Our special issue tells you why

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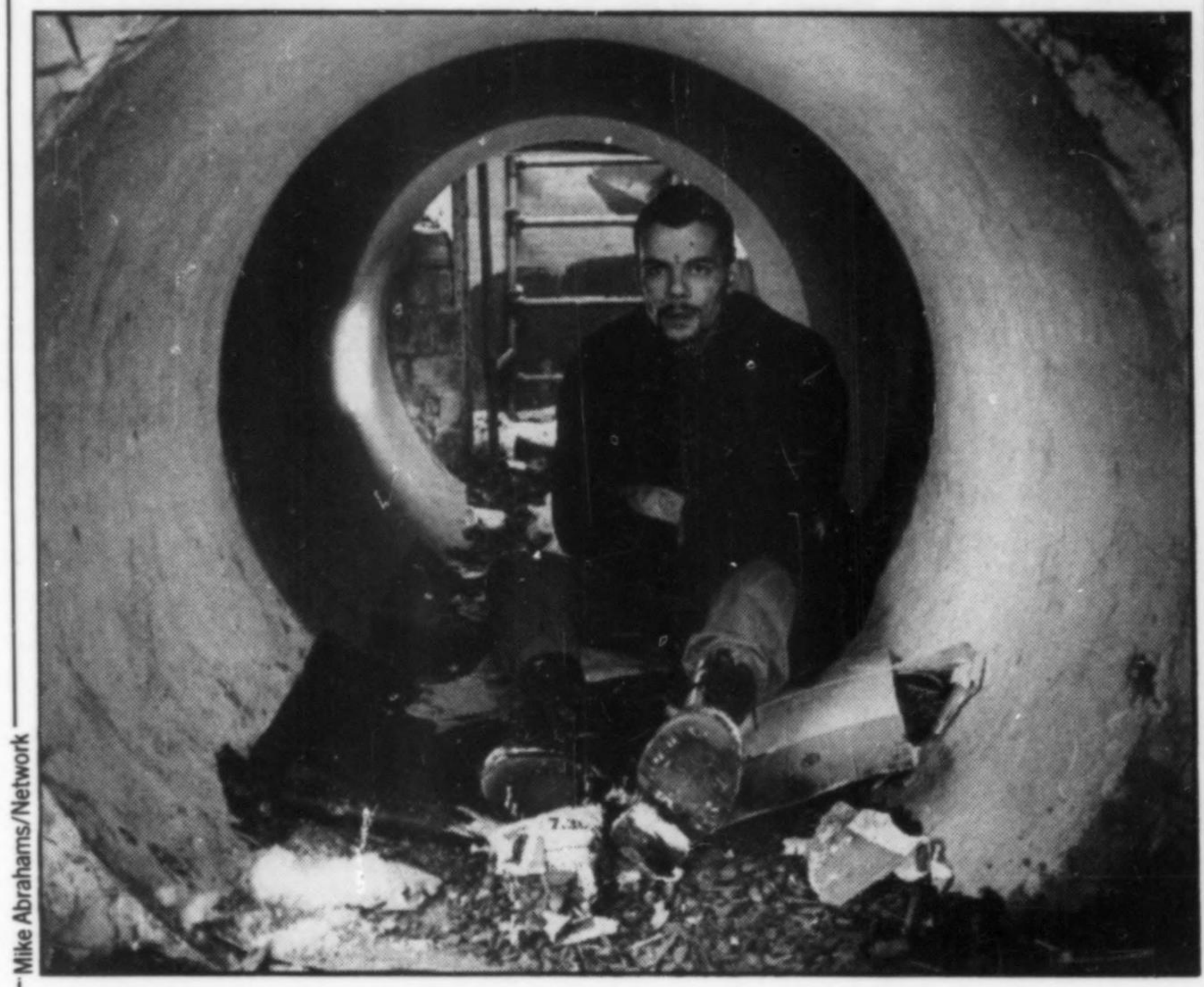

Mike Abrahams/Network

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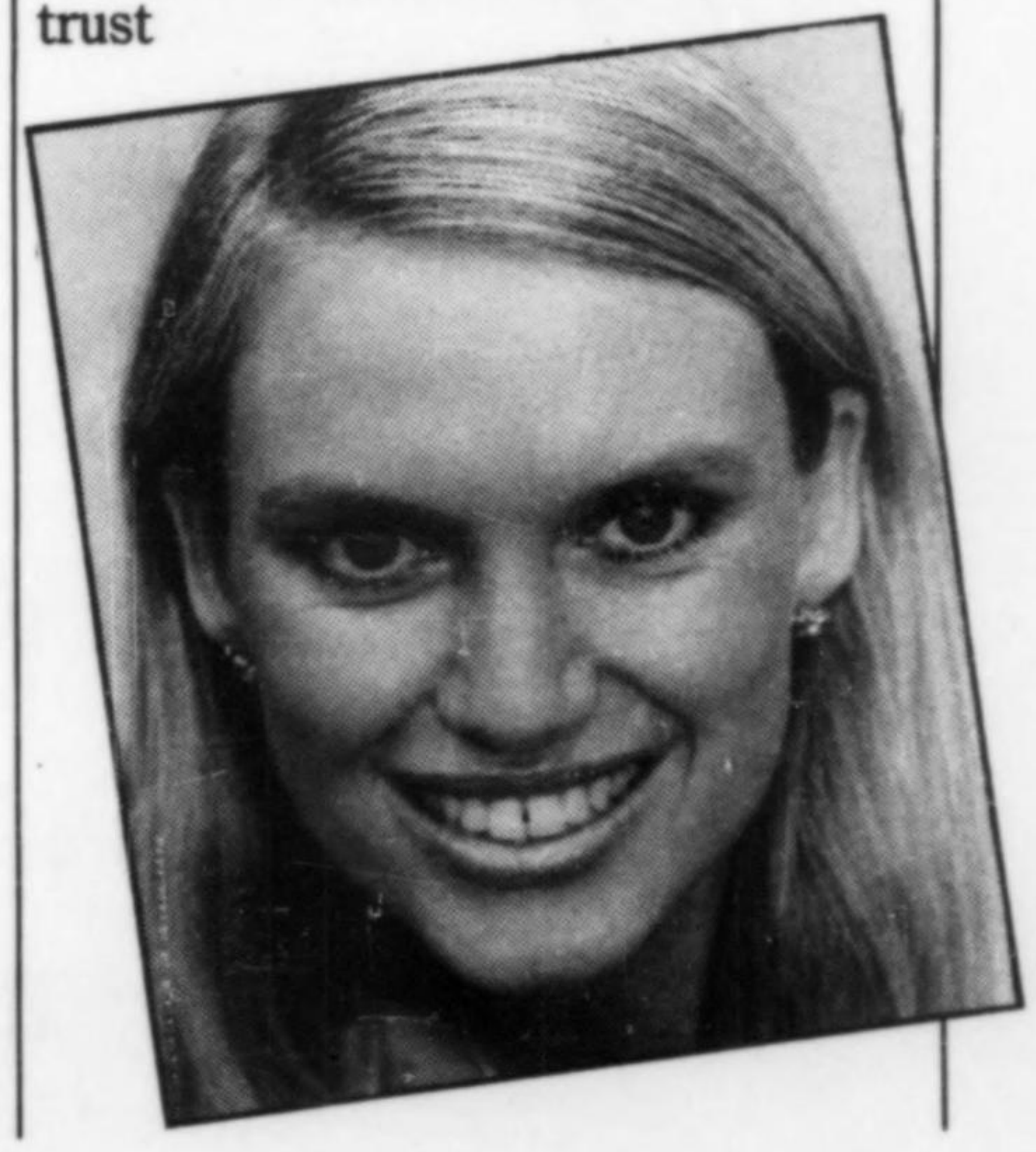

Welfare Watch

House rules

Tony Lynes on the cash limits on residential homes

In a debate on community care two weeks ago, MPs cited cases of elderly people having to spend part of their pension on topping up the residential home fees of a brother or sister which were not fully covered by income support payments from the DSS. In last week's benefit uprating statement, the Social Security Secretary Tony Newton promised a £100 million increase in payments to people in residential and nursing homes. It sounds a lot but, taking inflation into account, it is actually a reduction in support for claimants in residential care.

The present system of limits on social security payments for residential care was introduced in 1985 to reverse the rapid increase in spending on private homes. The government was forced to concede that the original limits were too low for many categories of homes, and some increases were allowed. But a recent survey of voluntary sector homes by the National Federation of Housing Associations (free from NFHA, 175 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8UP) shows that their average costs are far above the DSS limits. Some qualify for hostel deficit grants. For the rest, the gap is filled by charitable funds, topping-up payments by local authorities (only for residents under pension age), help from relatives, or simply by running at a loss.

The extra £100 million is the cost of raising the limits, from next April, by £10 a week in most cases. The percentage increase varies from 4.3 per cent for nursing homes for the terminally ill, where the limit will rise from £235 to £245 a week, to 7.1 per cent for residential homes for the elderly, where it will rise from £140 to £150. But the inflation rate for the year to September was 7.6 per cent.

It is true that the main income support rates are only going up by 5.2 per cent—the rate of inflation excluding housing costs. Residential homes, however, have to meet housing costs which often include interest on a large mortgage. They also have to meet staff costs, which generally rise faster than the retail prices. Even to keep pace with rising costs, increases of at least 8 per cent would have been needed.

The DSS wants to hold down spending on homes in preparation for the transfer of responsibility and funds to councils. But large numbers of elderly and disabled people will be living in residential homes for many years to come. Those homes cannot be expected to provide acceptable standards of care without adequate resources.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward sees a city awash with the homeless, jobless young

Floating on the surface of every city are teenagers who have overcome that last of British inhibitions: tapping fellow citizens for cash in the street. It's a feature, not just of Oxford Street, but of the Upper Richmond Road, Putney.

The ideology, though not the experience, of ministers and their advisers suggests that they should stay home with Mum and Dad. So an endless series of withdrawals of social security payments has made even the lucrative bed-and-breakfast industry shrink from the single young.

I would have said that most of us can't bear the thought of the physical danger that destitution and illegality imposes on the social flotsam, but for the obvious fact that we *can*, as can our rulers. Cathy Newman's *Young Runaways* report for the Children's Society, apart from finding that only 39 per cent of about 100,000 young runaways under the age of 17 were reported as missing from home, found that 34 per cent of her sample had run away from local authority care. Yet "care" accounts for less than 1 per cent of young people's legal domiciles.

Suppose we actually rewarded the refugees from that expensive "care" with the equivalent in housing? A room of one's own is a universal dream. Suppose that instead of whittling away the possibility, they were helped to provide their own bedspace, with access to a common kitchen, picking up a few skills in the process?

> *"Suppose we rewarded refugees from that expensive 'care' with the equivalent in housing?"*

This thought inspired Charity Projects to commission from Danny Levine his report *Building young lives: self-build and young single homeless people.* I discussed it here (26 May) but felt resigned to the idea that no one was actually interested in direct, obvious and simple solutions. Undeterred by the lack of interest in an issue that obtrudes on every city dweller every day, the North West London Housing Association staged a meeting last month. It drew together people concerned with instant needs, from charities like Centrepoint, Barnardos and the Salvation Army, and people investing both public and private funds in self-help housing.

My first impression was that every initiative of this kind depends on individuals who, by sheer persistence, find chinks in every change in the rules. We met, for example, Stella Clarke, the forceful Bristol JP who initiated the Zenzele self-build project there and who won that important concession from the DSS that people could draw benefit while employed on housing construction themselves.

We also met people like José Ospina of Chisel Ltd, a secondary housing cooperative in south London which has been exploring self-build for rent, issuing loan stock to the people involved in building for the value of labour they have invested. Chisel favours the Walter Segal system of cheap, dry and simple timber construction which the National and Provincial Building Society is actually funding with interest-only mortgages at the Sea-Saw Self-Build Housing Association for a mostly unemployed group in Brighton.

Gary Adams, of London and Provincial, was there to explain that the societies do have room for what the jargon calls non-status finance. Boldly, he declared that "the area of lending commercially to young homeless people is not generally recognised as the financial way forward by building societies. I, however, see the neglect of this area to be not only shortsighted, but a decision that overlooks the original function of the building society business which is to lend money for housing of *all* tenures."

Tony Shephard, of the government-funded Housing Corporation, explained that body's recent change of view on self-build, which it now sees "not as a fringe activity for skilled people seeking a bigger or better home but simply as one of the means by which social housing can be produced". In keeping with current ideology the corporation has "negotiated a package of private finance" with two major building societies to provide £160 million on attractive terms for self-build in the next five years.

It is also, he said, supporting the independent Community Self-Build Agency (chaired by Stella Clarke) which, with Community Service Volunteers and the London and Quadrant Housing Trust, is piloting a self-build rehabilitation programme for the young, homeless unemployed.

If you've read thus far you will be bewildered by the sheer number and names of public and private bodies trying to help the footloose young to help themselves. Individuals on both sides have committed themselves to this programme which seems so obvious to you and me. Half their energy is devoted to finding ways around the implacable hostility of the government towards our teenage adventurers.

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Stress fracture

Want an early heart attack? Don't mind low pay? Like work which is stressful and offers an unhealthy lifestyle? Join the ambulance service, and get sick on the NHS

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Europe, Europe: Barnett, Enzensberger, Kagarlitsky

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would be the target groups for an anti-poverty strategy aimed at raising their incomes to a specified level. But what level? Scientific research by Peter Townsend and others indicates that there is a poverty threshold at around 150 per cent of income support levels, below which poverty begins sharply to constrain participation.

For the purposes of illustrating the likely cost of abolishing poverty, this can be taken as a target income level. For a married couple with two children aged 11 to 15 it represents £144 a week exclusive of housing costs. This compares with average earnings of £254 a week and current income support entitlement of £96. Therefore the additional income required to lift this family to the target level would be £48.

Adding together the sums required to raise in a similar way the incomes of other groups living on income support, and those on incomes below or just above income support levels, produces a gross estimate of £14.6 billion. This is the extra cost for each year of lifting poor or near-poor families beyond the reaches of poverty.

Of course, if an anti-poverty strategy was to be successful in reaching those in need without worsening the "poverty trap" and the social disadvantages of means-tested benefits, a universal approach—paying benefits as of right—would be necessary. This would be much more expensive than a means-tested approach, but the additional expenditure could be recouped through taxes. Thus the above estimate would suffice as a guide to the net cost of abolishing poverty.

> *'Over five years, the incomes of the wealthiest 30 per cent would be trimmed by only 8-12 per cent to finance the change'*

Although the sum required is large, it is less than a third of the current social security budget and only 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product. It could be raised by a package of tax and national insurance contribution (NIC) changes. This could include an increase in the top rate of tax to 70 per cent, a more progressive tax and NIC structure, restricting mortgage interest and pension relief to the basic rate of tax, and taxing pension fund income. In short, only mild structural redistribution would be required. Over a period of five years, the incomes of the wealthiest 30 per cent of the population would be trimmed by only 8-12 per cent to finance this change.

For the past ten years the government has successfully confined the discussion of social security within the very narrow boundaries of targeting resources on the deserving poor or those in "genuine" need. Yet despite statistical fiddles, poverty has continued to mount remorselessly. The time has come to restore its abolition to the top of the democratic socialist agenda.

**State Imperfect: the book of social problems, by Michael Tintner (MacDonald Optima)*

FRINGE BENEFITS

Colin Ward eulogises a fraternal dialogue

It was only because of the *Guardian*'s admirable policy of obituarising people who were interesting rather than famous that I learned that Percival Goodman had died, aged 85. He was from the upper East Side of Manhattan, a bright scholarship boy who won a classical training in architecture at the *École des Beaux Arts* in Paris, set up his office in Broadway before the war and for 25 years after it was professor of architecture at Columbia University.

Percy had a brother, eight years younger, who was a great source of worry. Paul was an equally gifted student, learning from Morris Cohen at City College, then fired from various teaching jobs, not because of his outrageous sexual behaviour but because of his defence of it. He was also an unpublishable anarchist poet and novelist. Why couldn't he settle down to domestic bliss like Percy and Naomi and build himself a solid reputation? Percy, after all, was equally avant-garde in his field, designing more than 50 synagogues in an uncompromisingly unorthodox way. He called himself "an agnostic who was converted by Hitler".

In wartime, writers flourish, but the drawing-boards of architects and planners become bare. It's a time when all societies live on hope: that present sacrifices may bring future rewards, that guilt over past neglect may produce resolution for subsequent social justice.

Dozens of books were written on both sides of the Atlantic on the ideas that should guide the postwar reconstruction of towns and cities. Most are totally forgotten. One remains relevant and exciting. The unemployed architect and the draft-dodging anarchist collaborated between 1942 and 1945 on *Communitas: means of livelihood and ways of life,* published in 1947 by the University of Chicago Press.

For years it had a kind of underground, word-of-mouth existence, thanks to the advocacy of famous academics like David Riesman and of writers like Lewis Mumford. They found it was the only modern contribution to the art of building cities which "deals with the underlying values and purposes, political and moral, on which plannning of any sort must be based".

When Paul had become a modish social critic as a result of *Growing Up Absurd,* the brothers revised their book as a Vintage Paperback in 1960, reprinted until Paul's death in 1972. This is the edition you can find in secondhand bookshops. They appended a chapter on banning cars from cities, and Percy became an increasingly radical critic of what was actually happening, taking part in a sit-down protest at his own university's real-estate imperialism in the neighbourhood and against the onslaught on Harlem. He insisted that his profession was only justified if it served all the people, not just developers.

When he came to talk at the Architectural Association in London in 1973 about his vision of life in the year 2000, he gave a delightful and profound account of *"The Double E"* (economy and ecology) which should guide popular involvement in the environment. His book of that name came from Doubleday Anchor in 1978.

Communitas begins with a laconic analysis of a miscellany of 20th-century ideals of urban solutions, which the authors divided into green belt plans, industrial plans and integrated plans. They then arrived at three quite different formulae for ideal communities. The first was the City of Efficient Consumption which had four main characteristics. "Work and life centre around the market. The moral drives are imitation and emulation. The decoration is display. Close by is the open country, for full flight." Do you recognise it?

The second was The New Commune, in which "by regional independence of industries and by the close integration of factory and farm workers...the industrial region as a whole can secure for itself an independent bargaining power in the national whole". It is an idealised version of the economy that actually sustains the Italian province of Emilia Romagna today.

The third was called Maximum Security: Minimum Regulation, exactly the issue that William Beveridge in his Liberal way was struggling with at the same time. It envisaged a two-tier economy. Everyone was obliged to work for a short period in the basic economy tending machines producing food, clothing and shelter, distributed free to all. The rest of their lives were in a luxury economy in which we all did what we liked. Medicine and transport would be provided by a financial arrangement between the subsistence and the secondary economies. It's a solution to many current ideological dilemmas.

I've said enough to show that this was one of the most useful and creative books of the century. Neither of the Goodmans could have conceived of it on his own. "Thus," they wrote 45 years ago, "the brothers alone can do together what they could not do separately."